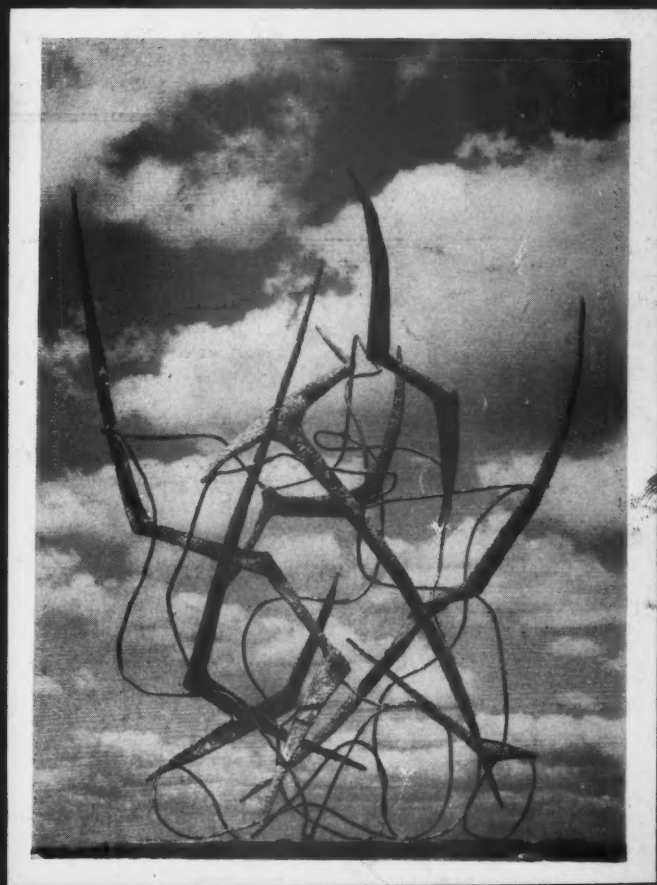


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DECEMBER 1954

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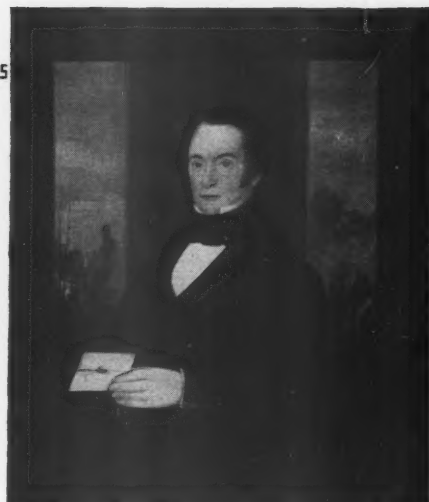






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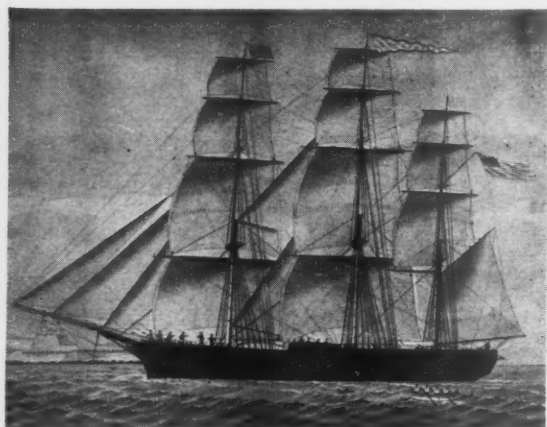
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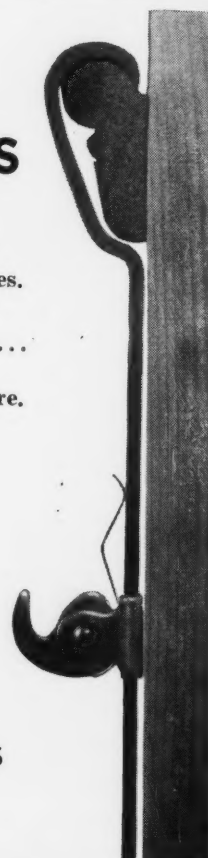
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THEODORE ROSZAK:  
Sea Quarry, steel, 1950  
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## Foreword . . .

As guest editor of this special issue of *Art in America*, we assume responsibility for the general tenor of its contents. The editor, Mrs. Lipman, and her editorial board gave us a completely free hand in determining the topics and inviting the contributors. The only limitations were those imposed by space, by the title of the magazine, and by the title of this issue: *Trends 1954*.

We have been concerned with three major questions. What directions appear to be especially significant in very recent work in architecture, sculpture, painting and the graphic arts in the United States? Are these directions related or independent? What social forces are affecting the character of this work? From the outset we have assumed that critics' appraisals and statements by artists would not be sufficient to bring these objectives into focus. We have therefore sought contributions on certain tangential questions. What is the policy of museums primarily concerned with contemporary expression? What policies underlie the exhibitions they sponsor? What kind of work is attracting our leading collectors? Is the American government likely to develop any change of approach towards support or patronage of the arts?

It will be apparent in the main that this issue

does not attempt to review all trends current. The broadly catholic views of Messrs. Baur and Neuberger come closer than some of our other contributors to giving a well-rounded picture. Our own views are narrower and, we fear, less civilized. What selection of trends may emerge from these pages is, then, a mirror of our prejudices. Yet each contributor is responsible for what he has written; we provided only the most general indication of what we hoped *Trends 1954* might be. Thus, any cumulative effect has resulted from the selection of contributors, not from any detailed suggestions on our part.

We discarded an original intention to defend our prejudices, first because we think our contributors have ably defended themselves, and second because we have decided that it is better editorial manners to stay in the background. It is only fair to say, however, that in certain details we do not agree with some of our contributors, and we have even reviewed unfavorably, on other occasions, one or two of the paintings reproduced here. But when it comes to trends we are thoroughly in accord with the substance of these pages; and it should be perfectly obvious that we have a high regard for the best work of the two artists whom we invited to air their views.



It has been difficult to determine a proper sequence for these articles. Any arrangement is arbitrary, but the one we have chosen does have a certain significance. Mr. Scully's discussion of the newest architecture is so provocative that we decided to place it in the lead. Furthermore, architecture has the power to bring the other visual arts into an interrelationship, and we are happy to observe that Mr. Scully considers the specific application of this potentiality today. He finds more cause for hope now than in what we venture to call the egocentric architecture of the recent past. Among the ways of being egocentric in architecture, two have struck us with some force: an architect may rule out all painting and sculpture whatever, or he may disguise his domination by the passive acceptance of something stale. When will our Balthasar Neumanns welcome our Tiepolos, our Johann Michael Fischers engage our Ignaz Günthers, or our Brunelleschis seek out our Donatellos?

Mr. Ferber's considerations of sculpture go to its very fundamentals. We believe that his essay will live in the literature of its subject. Mr. Gottlieb, in a courageous and forthright statement, balances the hopes against the despair of the artist in modern society. In our opening trio of articles, then, the reader is asked to consider the character of very modern forms and to assess them against the pressures exerted by today's public.

Among the hopeful signs for the creative artist (as opposed to the slick practitioner or the merely repetitious performer), we think the possibility of a more enlightened federal policy toward the arts is perhaps the most important. No one knows more about this subject than Mr. Goodrich, and no one has been more active in trying to initiate certain much-to-be-desired changes. Whether these changes come to pass or not, we think Mr. Goodrich's article will have a lasting historical importance. Here is the first informal discussion by the able chairman of the Committee on Government and Art since its report, which won a remarkable unanimity of opinion from the most diverse elements engaged in the arts, was forwarded to the President of the United States.

Museums and collectors provide a less remote source of hope to the artist. Their policies and their tastes have the power to quicken the arrival

of genuine talent to the point of understanding by an informed public. Accordingly, we asked Mr. Washburn, who selects the paintings for the Pittsburgh International, to give a retrospective opinion of the value of America's only venture into this field. We applaud the honesty of his statement as we have applauded the courage of his selections for the 1952 International. Mr. Baur, of the Whitney Museum of American Art, emphasizes the search for quality, not trends, that very properly motivates the choices of his institution; his essay happily coincides with the reopening of the Whitney in its new quarters on West 54th Street. Mr. Neuberger, whose collection is shown here this month, has long been in the lead of American collectors enthusiastic about contemporary American painting. If there were more Mr. (and Mrs.) Neuberger, each following a personal taste, developing its range through experience, through study and through personal contact with artists, Mr. Gottlieb might have written a different kind of statement.

In any discussion of contemporary trends it would be unpardonable if persons below middle age were not heard from. We have been told that a middle-aged man is one who no longer regards himself as a promising young man. This cruel wisdom we accept with what grace we can. None of our final group of contributors has, as far as we know, gone Over The Hill. We doubt that any of them has a clear memory of presidents before FDR. We suspect that Mr. Scully is also one of their company. We are quite certain, however, that when Mr. Hunter won his spurs as an art critic for the New York Times it would have been just possible (technically) for a son of ours to go forth into the cold new world. We are also certain that Mr. Seldis' voice is increasingly listened to on the West Coast.

While Mr. Kricke is among the youngest of our contributors, that is not why his comments appear at the very end of this issue. It seemed appropriate to let us Americans speak for ourselves and then to offer a reaction from abroad. If we are not quite so confident as Mr. Kricke that in America lies the artistic hope of the world, we most profoundly wish that his faith in us may come true.

— S. LANE FAISON, JR., *Guest Editor*



Yale Art Gallery, 1952-53, by Louis I. Kahn and Douglas Orr. Exhibition Space

# ***Archetype and Order in*** **Recent American Architecture**

BY VINCENT J. SCULLY, JR.

The most significant development in American architecture during the last few years would seem to be the trend, evident in the work of many architects, toward order and clarity in design. This trend brings with it a renewed sense of large simple volumes of space, of clear structural articulation, of high, dignified proportions, and of unity in the whole. With it has come, like a dam breaking, a release from many of the curious academicisms and clichés of the recent past. Unnecessary asymmetries have disappeared; obsessively "functional" planning no longer shreds the building mass; space no longer necessarily "flows." Instead, with the renewed sensibility toward volumetric space, vaults and domes have reappeared to model volumes plastically with the continuity of their surfaces. Along with these have come precise pavilions, defined by the metrical beat of high colonnades. Both dome and pavilion insist upon the unity of the spaces which their structural systems create. Consequently, a desire for that unity is causing architects to investigate various kinds of space frames, in which the overall spanning structure is essentially unified and cellular rather than simply additive in a bay system.

The large open spaces formed by all these means are hospitable to painting and sculpture, either as autonomous objects or complementary details. Most of the architects here considered conceive of their buildings as great shelters within which the other arts — not necessarily executed by themselves or by their protégés — can live full lives and exert their maximum effect upon the lives of men. Therefore they have little fear that painting and sculpture from the present or the past will "spoil" their work, and many of them are better prepared than most architects of recent times to recognize quality in those arts when they see it.

The present movement is far removed from the

eclectic classicism of the early twentieth century and from its later, official or antiquarian manifestations. Yet so earnestly does it seek for integrity and order in the parts and in the whole that one is tempted to call it truly "classic" in its aspirations. Certainly the architects who participate in it have begun to create an abstract, anti-romantic, classic order without recourse to antique details. But the movement is not purely a classic one; there are elements in it, as there are in the art of our time in general, which evoke both archaic and baroque values. The desire for a few strongly contrasted shapes with decisive details, for the direct impact of fixed and very "formal" forms, is essentially an archaic one, as in much contemporary painting and sculpture. It reveals the yearning of a complex age for direct and simple experience, deeply felt and presented as general truth, without rhetoric. At the same time, the technical possibilities of vaults, domes, and space frames also give rise to forms which have certain "baroque" qualities of curvilinearity or of spatial continuity. Where such occur they are at present clearly differentiated from contrasting cubical volumes, either hung within them (Fig. 6), used as vestibules (Fig. 5), or set apart as separate structures (Fig. 10). In these ways each form remains clearly itself; nothing flows together. The whole scheme remains at each point clear in its parts.

These qualities tend to recall other moments in the history of architecture, and the architects concerned with them are by no means unaware of the past. One may thus be forgiven for beginning a discussion of the present movement through an analogy with the past, in this instance with Rome of the Hadrianic period, 117-138 A.D. Grappling with complex problems of belief and power, and having available the accumulated philosophical and aesthetic experiences of centuries, the age of Hadrian, in the person of its



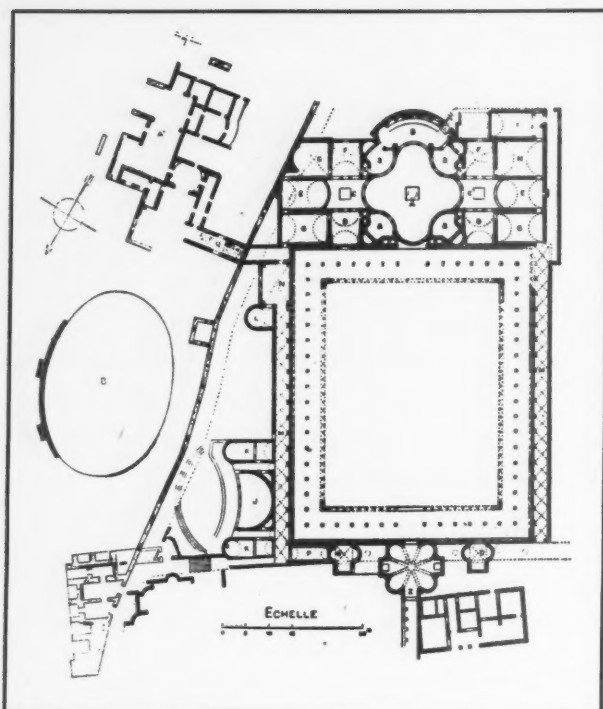


Fig. 1. Piazza d'Oro, Hadrian's Villa near Tivoli  
C. 117-138 A.D. Plan

emperor, yearned like ours for vanished simplicities and lost clarities. Like this generation, it consciously sought to employ ancient and basic forms in its creation of the new. Technically proficient in building, with concrete vaults and domes as well as stone trabeation available to it, the age produced probably its most memorable monuments in the Pantheon at Rome and in the Emperor's own villa near Tivoli. I should like to use a plan of the so-called Piazza d'Oro from that villa (Fig. 1), as a kind of prelude to the work of this generation of architects. Several elements in it will be referred to again as analogies to the modern work: the lobed, "melon" dome, with oculus, which creates a kind of vestibule and recalls, as Lehmann has shown, the windswept tent pavilions depicted on Etruscan mirrors; the columned rectangle of the court, which is both Greek stoa and peristyle; the terminal nymphaeum with its curvilinear colonnade carrying a continuous beam, perhaps domed, certainly with light coming from above and from the sides. These elements, taken as a directed experience in space, made a design full at once of invention and of memory. With precise differentiation of part from part, and with a decisive direction of tech-

nical possibilities toward spatial expression, the architect of the Piazza d'Oro, probably Hadrian himself, evoked Greek, Etruscan, and Roman archetypes in the service of his own longing. One may feel that basic archetypes of human experiences of the world are here as well, created by the metaphors of architecture. That is: the defined plain of the courtyard, the forest of the colonnade, the cave of the dome, the light that bursts through the cave, and the sound of water.

It is the primary characteristic of the architects of the present movement that they appear to express, with a similar sense of memory and of the uses of metaphor, the same clear archetypes of plain, pavilion and cave. Behind them all, in varying degrees, stands the work of one master: in this case, Mies Van der Rohe. Eight or ten years ago one might have felt that the architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright would by the present time be exerting a more important influence upon creative architects than that of Mies. Such, however, has not generally been the case. It is true that Wright's work, certainly rich in archetypal metaphor, is now enjoying a considerable amount of popular success. The youngest generation of architects, with whose work we cannot as yet be adequately familiar, has also been brought during recent years into increasing contact with Wright's architecture and its principles — although these latter have often been obscured rather than clarified by the statements of Wright himself and of many of his admirers. Yet the generation with which we are concerned has turned for the time being from the richly interwoven, structurally complex, spatially fluid buildings of Wright toward the simpler, more static, precisely controlled and detailed work of Mies. Taking the productions of Wright's imitators as a sign that only Wright himself can meaningfully control his kind of design, it has sought to base its own development upon something most desired in our time, something clear, integral, known, and capable of being fully, not partially, controlled.

Mies Van der Rohe's more recent buildings — the Illinois Institute of Technology, the Farnsworth house at Plano, Illinois, and the Lakeshore Apartments in Chicago — have had the most direct effect upon recent developments. His Barce-



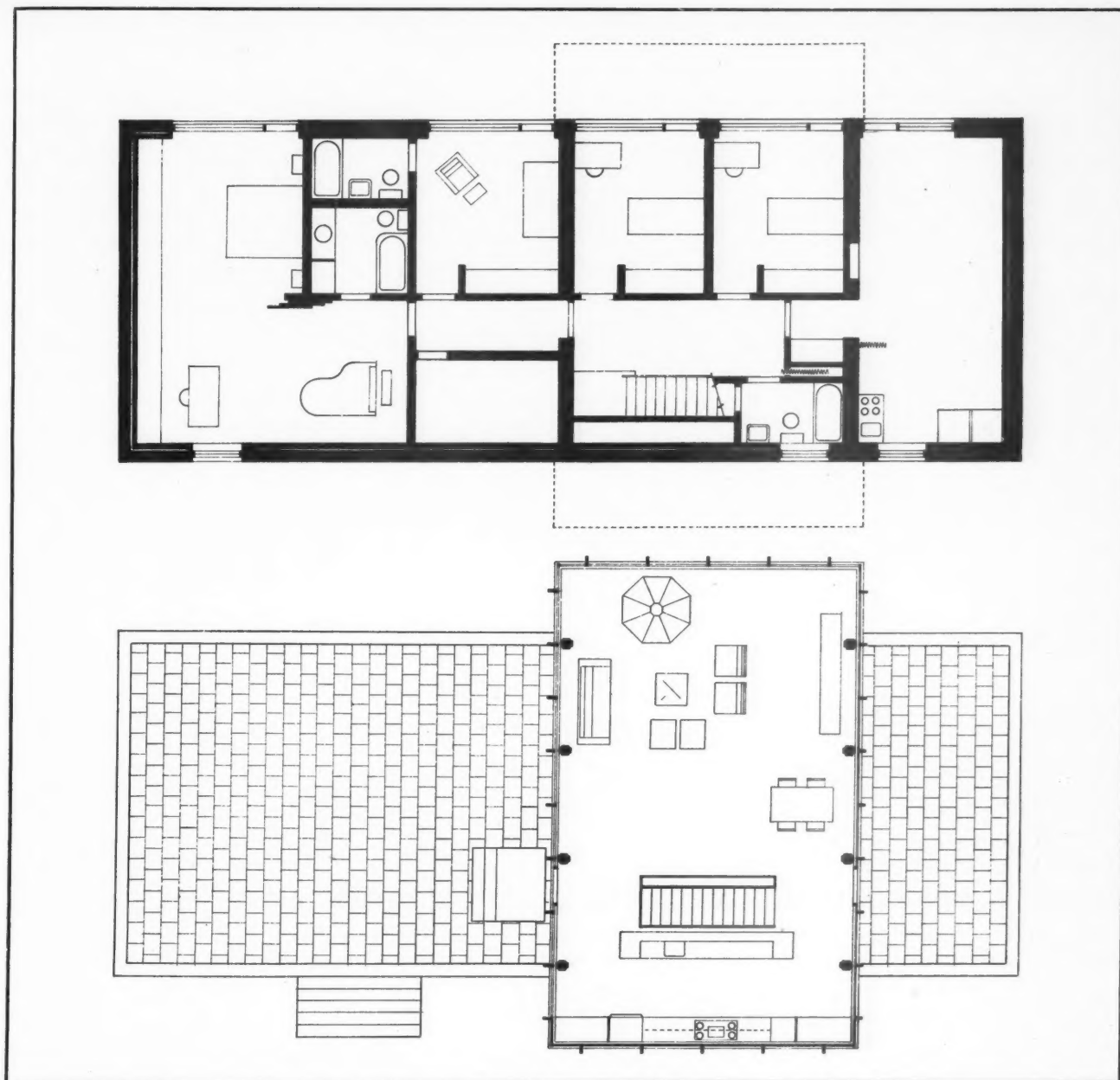


Fig. 2. Wiley House, New Canaan, Connecticut, 1953, by Philip Johnson. Plans

lona Pavilion, of 1929, with the flowing space which was influential in the 'thirties and 'forties, has been less of an influence in the contemporary movement than have his later, more precisely volumetric and structurally articulated buildings. These are put together with a craftsmanship in steel and brick which evokes the craftsmanship in stone of the Greek temple. Like the temple they attempt only what they can fully accomplish, one clear volume of space, a few simple shapes, the clear integrity of part to part in proportion and detail. As unashamed works of art they break with the positivistic functionalism of the late Bauhaus

school, and they demonstrate, as does the work of Wright, that the basic function of architecture in any society is a spiritual one — not least in our own. They break also with the painting-inspired play of planes of earlier "International Style" architecture and insist again upon the direct rhythm of the structural skeleton. Frame and cladding are precisely differentiated, and each element is clear.

Contrary to what might normally have been expected, the effect of such buildings upon this generation of architects has not been a purely academic one. Eero Saarinen, whose work has been



Fig. 3. Wiley House, New Canaan, Connecticut, 1953, by Philip Johnson. Exterior

of considerable importance in defining the present trend, at first appeared to follow Mies rather closely in his General Motors Research Center, but then went on to his advanced domical structure at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. In Florida, Paul Rudolph has followed a similar pattern. His first, more precisely Miesian buildings have been followed by continued invention and by a similar movement toward vaults and domes. The reason for such continued growth from a beginning of Miesian principles was stated unmistakably by both Saarinen and Rudolph at a recent convention of the American Institute of Architects. Each of them felt "the uses of history" to be both the liberating and the solidifying factor in his growth. Imbued with the sense of pure form and precise control which the work of Mies possesses, these architects felt in a sense

liberated from the clichés of the "modern movement," from the psychological blocks concerning the "past" which had been one of the Bauhaus legacies, and, consequently, from the expedients of fashionable change. The anti-historical attitude of the 'thirties has thus given way to a more civilized awareness of the unity of all architecture, as of all human experience. Like Wright and LeCorbusier, and unlike the Bauhaus group, the present generation is prepared to learn from the architecture of all periods and places; like LeCorbusier, but unlike Wright and the romantics, it is also prepared to admit what it has learned from its forebears.

Of all those who admit their debt both to Mies and to history, few architects have been more influential than Philip Johnson, working out of his office in New Canaan, Connecticut. Johnson's

debt to Mies was apparent in his first house, at Cambridge, Massachusetts, and in his second house, at New Canaan, of 1949. In the latter, however, the division of the building into two separate blocks, one of steel frame and entirely glazed, the other of brick with only three round windows, indicated his own more original and dramatically opposed expression of the archetypal sensations of enclosure and exposure. His Wiley House, at New Canaan, completed in 1953, can show a further stage in that development (Figs. 2, 3, 4). Upon the hill slope is set a clearly defined platform of masonry. Within the platform are the bedrooms, facing down the slope. Upon the platform, at a cross axis to it, is a high open pavilion of heavy timber structure. This contains living room and kitchen. Monumental tim-

ber columns support the roof beams. Their intersection is plastically expressed, and they have a decisively different scale from that of the smaller window mullions and stiffening fins. Entrance to the living pavilion follows a measured and ceremonial path from the stairs across the open platform. To reverse the movement and to climb from the enclosed, fairly dim spaces below to the living area above is to experience a poetic and meaningful contrast between enclosure and release. To this end the living area is, as it were, double-scaled. Its high, wide, classically "abstract" proportions are in direct contrast to the more intensely scaled, low-ceilinged effects of Wright. In most of Wright's houses the effects of pressure and of release are even more fully developed, but they are made to flow together into a con-



Fig. 4. Wiley House, New Canaan, Connecticut, 1953, by Philip Johnson. Interior of Living Pavilion



tinuous experience which usually finds its fulfillment back out again in the space of nature. In the Wiley Home these effects do not flow but are kept separate from each other and clearly apart from, though open to, nature as well. The house is a small, contained temple in the landscape. In such a temple-pavilion, sculpture also could function with its traditional power, as in Hadrian's villa or in Johnson's own house, to people the space with its own magical presence.

From the precise rectangles of the Wiley House, with its contrasting circular pool, Johnson's design has moved toward an increased use of curvilinear forms, of the circle and the ellipse in plan and the vault in section. His synagogue for Port Chester, New York (Figs. 5, 6), now under construction, is again set upon a decisive base, be-

fore which is an elliptical vestibule with a fairly low dome, lit by an oculus. One is reminded of the vestibule at the Piazza d'Oro (Fig. 1) and, in point of fact, a direct experience of Hadrian's Villa, as of Palladio and of the Baroque, has played a large part in Johnson's recent growth. Behind the vestibule rises the high, trabeated pavilion which is the main body of the building. From the beams of the ceiling penetrated vaults are frankly suspended. They move — again like a wind-blown canopy — toward the altar, and are echoed by the altar shape itself. A play of rectangular and curvilinear volumes is set up, lit in the vestibule from above, in the body of the synagogue by slots in the side walls.

Johnson's vaults of the synagogue are plainly expressed as non-structural, but their curvilinear

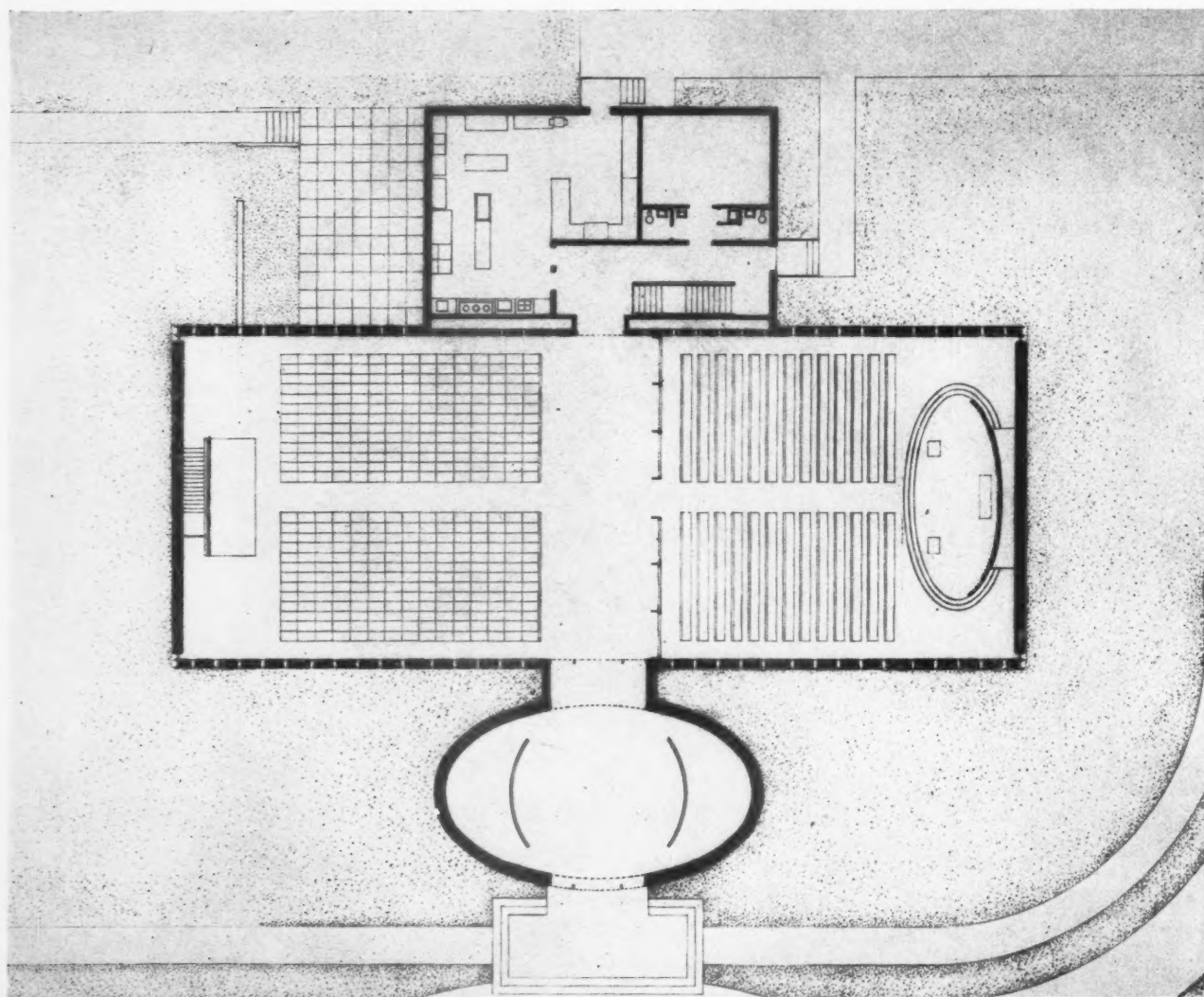


Fig. 5. Project for Synagogue, Port Chester, New York, 1954, by Philip Johnson. Plan



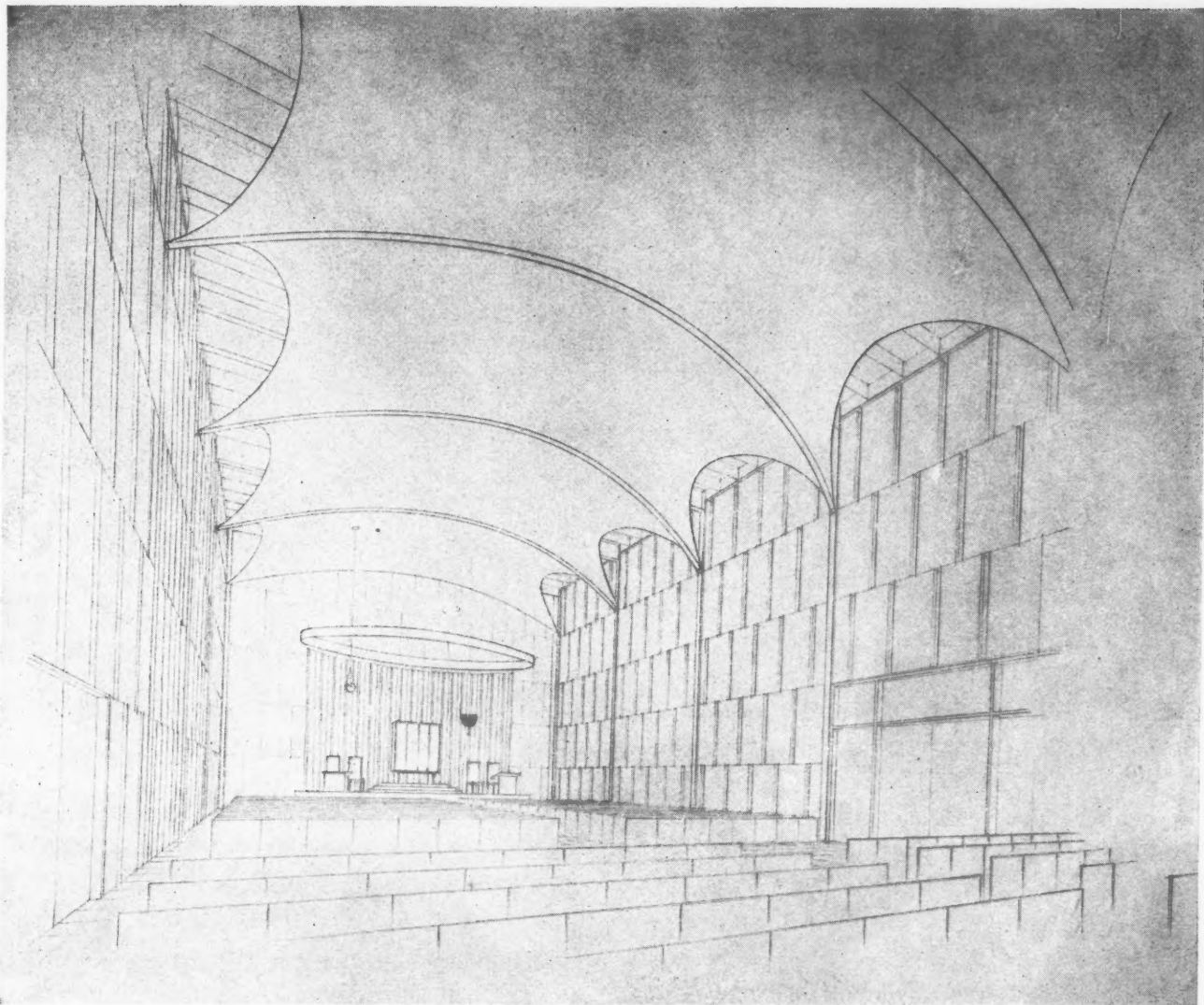


Fig. 6. Project for Synagogue, Port Chester, New York, 1954, by Philip Johnson. Interior Perspective

forms are poetic evocations of some of the vaults and slabs now being designed by the most advanced European engineers. Torroja's sweeping vaults, and Nervi's vaults and shell slabs all demonstrate the basically curvilinear pattern of the moment of bending which modern reinforced concrete, given adequate form work, can so beautifully attain. The spreading structural canopy which another kind of space frame can become was at least envisaged in the addition to the Yale Art Gallery, designed by Louis I. Kahn, with the collaboration of Douglas Orr and Henry Pfisterer, and completed in 1953 (frontispiece). Building code difficulties caused a revision of the system to the point where it was no longer a true space frame, but it still creates a strong and flexible setting for human activity and for works of art,

and it can be taken as symptomatic of the new direction in design. Each open volume of floor, enclosed by the quadrangular building block, is defined overhead by the powerful tetrahedrons of the reinforced concrete slab. These exert a cellular principle of growth which the exterior shape of the Art Gallery does not express but which Kahn's later projects are beginning to demonstrate. Their shapes (*Perspecta*, II, 1953), based upon the tetrahedron principle and the space frame, are part of the new movement as a whole in its search for the integral, complete and generalized form. In this case it would grow as a totality — columns, slabs, and spaces — from a reproductive principle inherent in the structural unit. Here again is a desire for intrinsic order in which Kahn is transposing the researches



Fig. 7. Maryville College Chapel and Theater, Knoxville, Tennessee, 1953-54, by Schweikher and Elting

of engineers like Samuely, LeRicollet, and Buckminster Fuller into the terms of human experience which make architecture.

The recent work of Paul Schweikher demonstrates a certain amalgamation of these influences toward geometric order, volumetric control and space frame structure. It is especially interesting because Schweikher was, in the 'thirties, one of the most informed and disciplined of those architects who attempted to base their personal growth upon principles which were close to those of Frank Lloyd Wright. Schweikher's movement in the 'fifties toward a kind of design which seems at first more Miesian than Wrightian is thus important as indicative of a trend. Beyond the superficial level, however, it becomes clear that Schweikher's present work represents a more integrated stage of the kind of design toward which he had apparently always been moving. His experiments with plank and beam construction in wood during the 'thirties — experiments strongly influenced by Japanese architecture — were concerned in essence with values rather apart from those of Wright, although many of his houses certainly owed much to Wright's example. Yet the plank and beam

system's skeletal insistence, like that of the mid-nineteenth-century "Stick Style," is basically different from the "flesh-covered" continuities of most of Wright's work. The beat of its columns and beams tends intrinsically to invoke the simple pavilion rather than a complex and poetically modulated series of shapes. Thus Schweikher's recently completed Maryville College Chapel and Theatre, near Knoxville, Tennessee, is not in essence so different from his work in wood of the 'thirties as it might at first appear to be (Fig. 7). Chapel at one end and theatre at the other are separated by an open court and connected by a high colonnade of noble proportions (Fig. 8). The reinforced concrete columns continue to be expressed where the brick cladding occurs. The chapel is lighted from above through the ends of shell concrete vaults which also add structural rigidity. A variety of functions are consequently pulled together into one building, as the vaults, the court, and the stage house are unified by the continuous rhythm of the structural system, and the basic system of proportions is fixed by it. The building becomes a large pavilion within which several shapes are set. This is its order. Once again we are reminded

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of temple, stoa, and the Piazza d'Oro.

Schweikher's projected church for Park Forest, Illinois (Fig. 9), is also one large shape, recalling buildings by Mies and Johnson but different from theirs in scale. Side walls of stone-concrete, like those used by Wright at Taliesin West and by Schweikher afterward in several buildings, support a true space frame made of light steel struts in pyramidal form. Here again, as in Kahn's Gallery, the space frame is intended to create one open volume of space which can then be partitioned as desired.

It is probably in Schweikher's projected Methodist Church for Pocahontas, Iowa (Fig. 10), that many of the elements of the movement we have been considering can be seen most clearly. Two decisively different shapes are set within an area defined by platform and by wall. The blocks of Sunday School and pastorate are separated by an enclosed court. Next to these is an open space where the church itself is set. This building is intended to contrast decisively with the

carefully studied rectangles of its site. In the architect's description for the building committee, it is of: "‘folded’ or ‘space-frame’ construction. It is proposed to build the framework of steel ribs and mesh, covering this inside and out with ‘Gun-nite’ concrete applied under pressure." An oculus above and trigonal windows below supply the illumination, which thus recalls that of Hadrian's melon dome and nymphaeum at the Piazza d'Oro — as the "folded" shape of Schweikher's dome also recalls that of Hadrian's.

Perhaps the few buildings which have been discussed are enough to base some tentative conclusions upon. The nature of the movement toward geometric order, structural expressiveness, and volumetric plasticity should be clear. The relation of this to a renewed and creative sense of historical precedent should also not be underestimated. It tends to demonstrate an important mode of vision and design among contemporary architects, open once more to the fullest kind of architectural experience but profoundly deter-

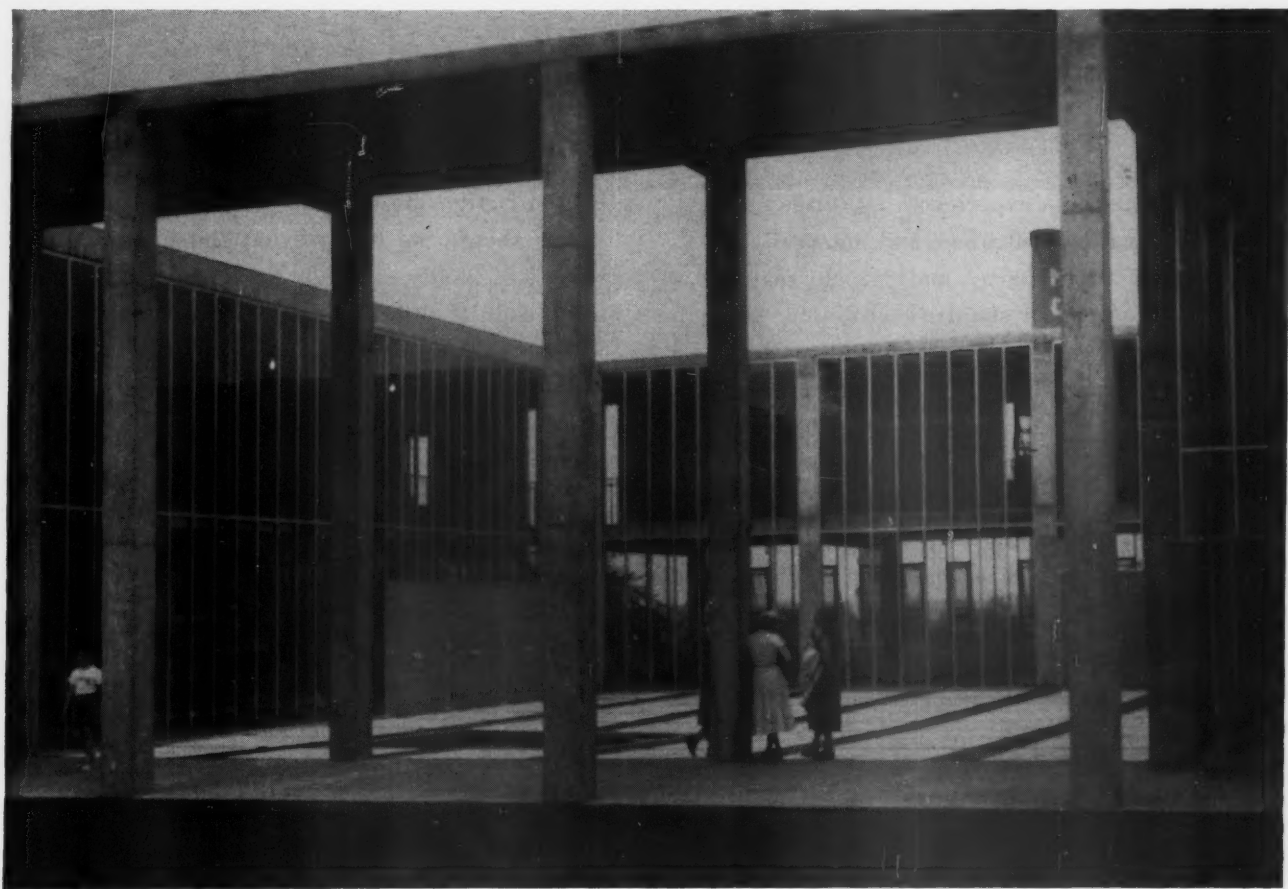


Fig. 8. Maryville College Chapel and Theater, Knoxville, Tennessee, 1953-54, by Schweikher and Elting. Interior Colonnade

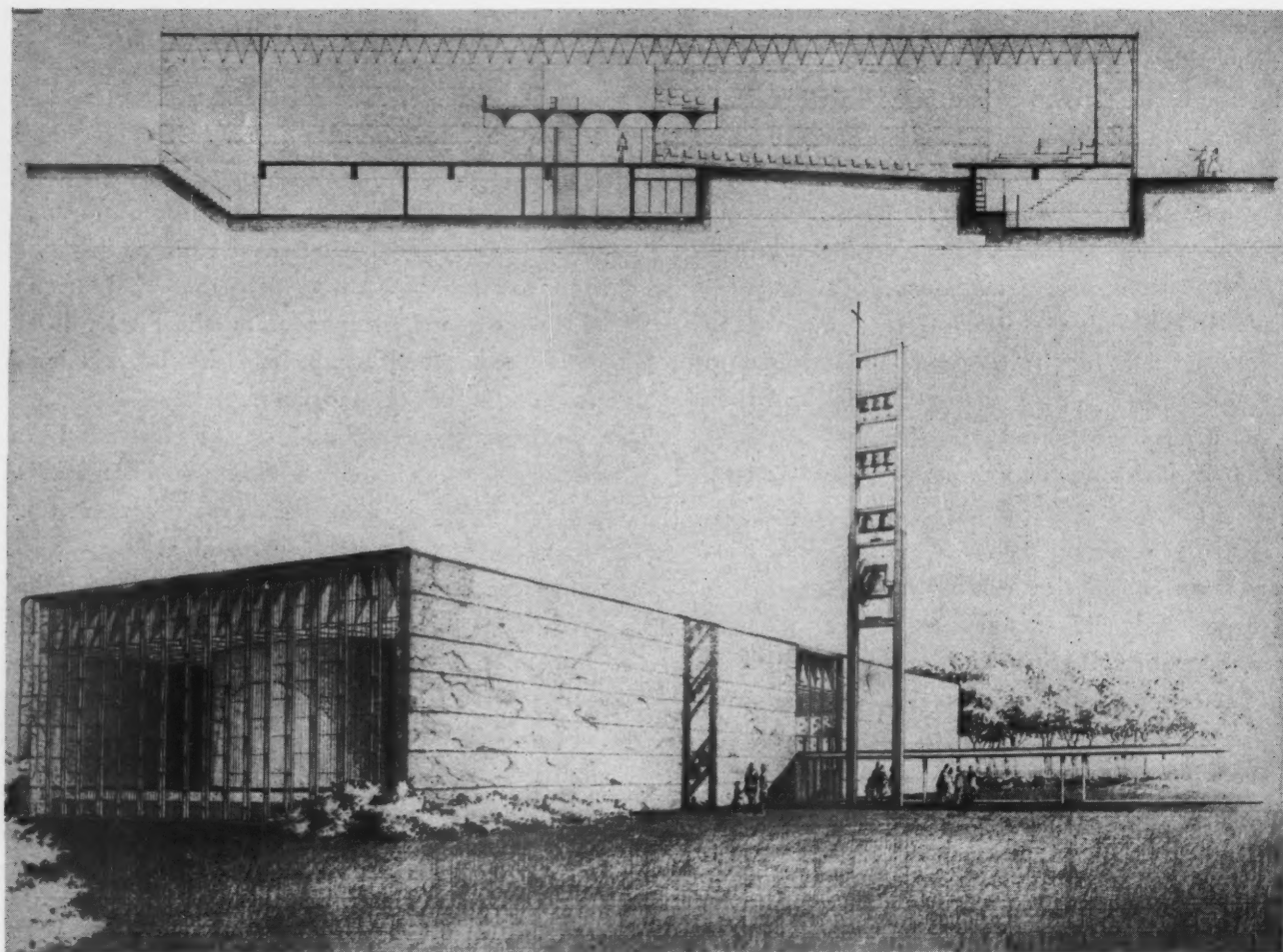


Fig. 9. Church, Park Forest, Illinois, 1954, by Schweikher and Elting

mined to create those experiences by forms which can be thoroughly controlled and integrally detailed in all their parts, and which may be developed into primary standards of design. From this concern derives a renewed interest in Renaissance and Antique systems of proportion and of columnar and vaulted structures. In these characteristics resides also the main relationship between the American architects and LeCorbusier. Their concern for standards, proportion, number, and geometry echoes in a sense his *Modulor*, as the rough surfaces of Kahn's and Schweikher's concrete recall his *Unité d'Habitation* at Marseilles. Most of the American buildings tend to lack the powerfully sculptural quality of LeCorbusier's forms. Still, their vaults, monumental columns, and articulated intersections relate them more to his work than to the structurally enigmatic, polished slab effects of American buildings of a few years ago, such as Lever House and the

United Nations Secretariat.

Nor should we believe that the present movement will finally represent such a direct rejection of Wright's objectives as it may now appear to do. Its conscious limitation of itself to a few geometric shapes may be taken as a kind of instructed humility, prepared to grow integrally, with elements it can handle, into powers of expression which may in the end become not less than Wright's own. Yet in one important respect the present movement breaks sharply with some aspects of Wright's philosophy, especially from that of his followers. The forms created by this generation are urban forms, contained, generalized, civil in their relationship to other forms. As such they indicate a turning away from romantic isolation, from the modern suburb, and from the decentralization of Broadacre City. They seek instead the qualities of the city, or, as in the case of the Wiley House, of urbanity in the

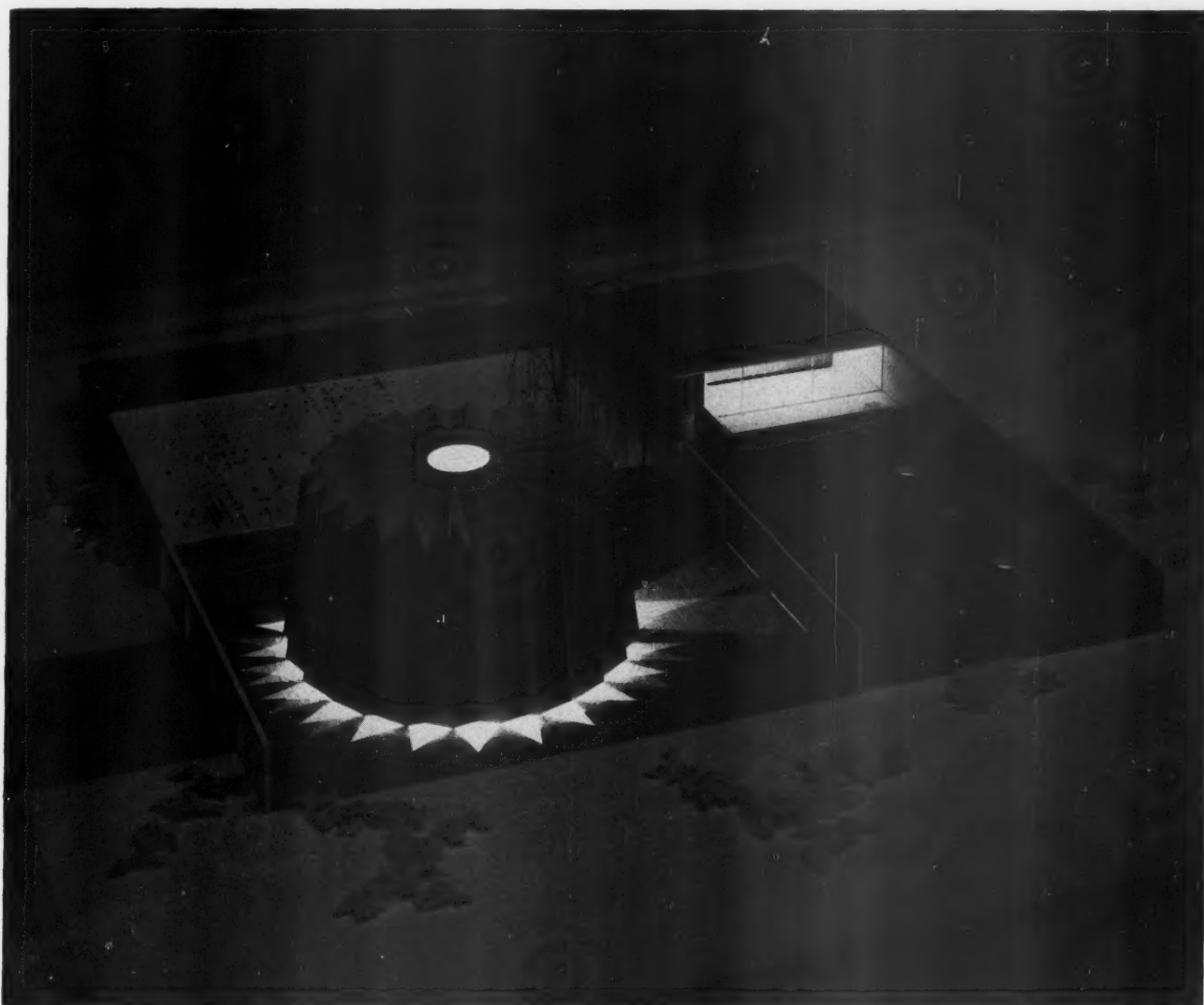


Fig. 10. Project for Methodist Church, Pocahontas, Iowa, 1954, by Schweikher and Elting

country. All of them recall, in one sense or another, the great tradition of European urban design; they are conceived in high-ceilinged blocks, as palazzo architecture. Such an attitude is a most poignant and meaningful one at the present time, when the city — until industrialism, the carrier of the primary values which formed western civilization — seems, after its nineteenth-century industrial decay, to be threatened with complete destruction. In that tradition of civilization, too, painting and sculpture, starved for worthy programs in the materialism of the modern world, are beginning once more to be sought for intelligently and with keen desire by the architects involved.

The attitude of these architects is thus rooted in optimistic and ancient principles. It rejects

the undignified, materialistic formlessness to be found in the Real Estate section of any Sunday newspaper. The order which it seeks is based upon human dignity, spiritual awareness, discipline, and pride. One can observe that the majority of the illustrated projects have had religious programs. It is no attack upon the spirituality of those buildings to note that their basic forms could be used for factories, office buildings, apartment houses, and individual homes as well. What this generation is seeking is a standard for generalized answers upon a noble plane. Like the architects of the Greek Revival, but without their restriction to "classicizing" forms, this generation would have all its buildings function like temples, on the hills, within the cities, and upon the hearts of men.





HERBERT FERBER: *The Burning Bush*, copper and lead, 1951-53  
*B'nai Israel Synagogue, Millburn, New Jersey*

## On Sculpture

BY HERBERT FERBER

*ED. NOTE: Mr. Ferber participated in a panel discussion of artists and teachers at the annual meeting of the College Art Association of America in Philadelphia last January. We found his remarks so stimulating that we asked him if he would formulate them in an essay. "I will do it if it kills me," he wrote us. We are happy to report that the career of one of America's most promising sculptors is no longer endangered. Mr. Ferber is in the best of health.*

In attempting to write about sculpture I have become increasingly aware that my ideas are really a function of my convictions as a sculptor. My reading of the monuments of the past has been determined by the needs and desires which shape my own work. No artist enters this arena, where the choices he makes are absolute, without a heritage from the past, but he knows that in these decisions will lie the unique quality of his work and the proof of his bias. It is, then, from this point of view that I wish to make some statements about sculpture.

The contemporary sculptor was brought up on the concept of the monolith. Western tradition from Egypt through Greece and Rome, the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, to the nineteenth century, reached its culminations through the monolith alone. It was a tradition peopled with representations of figures, worldly or divine, and with, on the whole, solid, massive human and animal forms. Different concepts of sculpture, as

we now see, were realized in other places and at other times. But they contributed little to the tradition with which the Twentieth century sculptor was confronted. The idea of sculpture he inherited, it seems to me, was a "centripetal" one: sculpture was tied to its own center.

In our time, however, the canon of tradition and taste has been overthrown and sculpture has now become an art of extension. It has become "centrifugal," and, in the work I admire, it shuns the center. This revolution has brought new life to an art which had been mired in tradition. Without this change in concept, in my opinion, it would make only comparatively minor contributions to the art of our time.

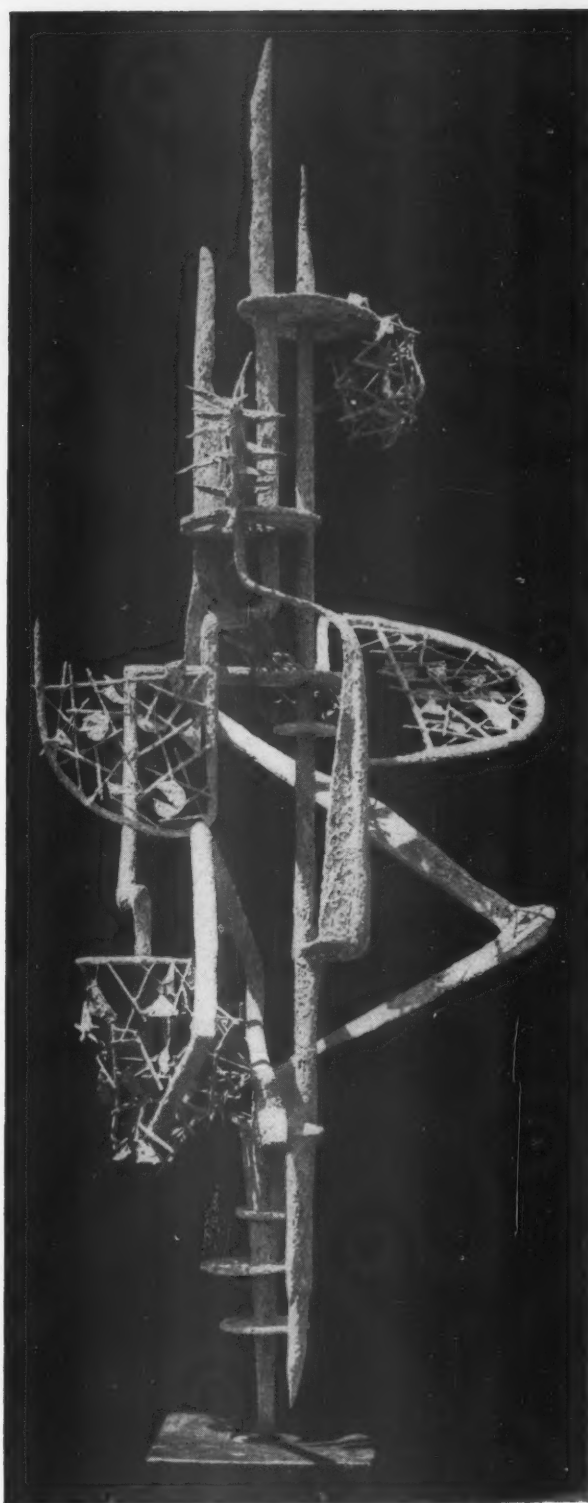
Monolithic sculpture has been a representation of the animate world, man and animal, however transformed or transcended. Perhaps the closed forms of biological life were a source for the forms of sculpture even when verisimilitude was not the aim. When the tradition was broken, when the human or divine body was no longer held to be either sacred or inviolable, for whatever reason, a new era dawned in the realm of art. Cubism fragmented the object in creating the work of art from its parts. The Bauhaus and the Constructivists made a fetish of materials and logical structure. Surrealism and Expressionism



re-evoked the fantastic and the non-rational. Together they brought new forms and new subjects to an art which need no longer follow physiological channels; it can carry its strength through "lines of force" which are not necessarily enclosed in a biological envelope. In contemporary sculpture this has, I think, opened a new way which marks a radical divergence from the old.

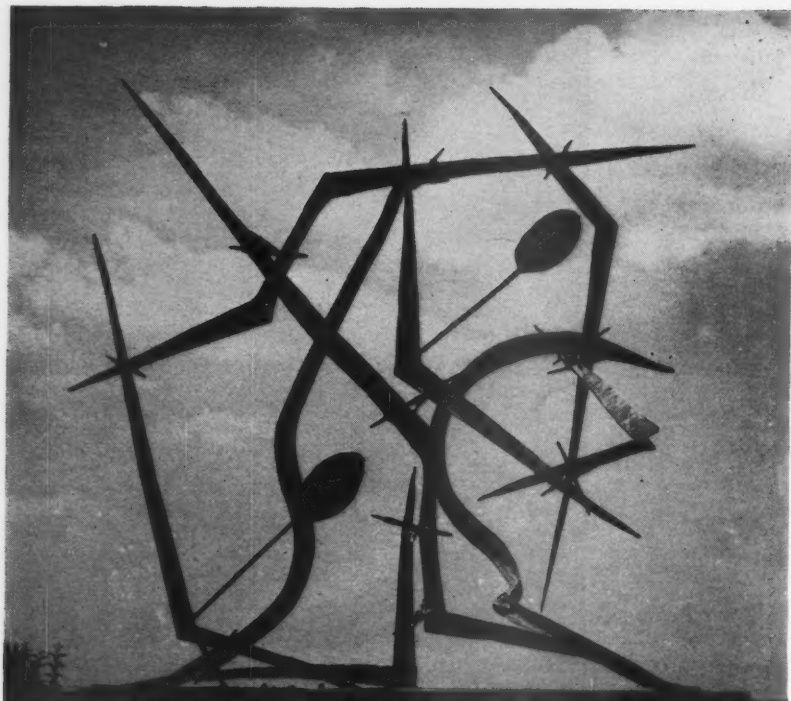
Monolithic sculpture, centripetal sculpture, possessed by the idea of mass, presents a continuous surface, enclosing a volume, which is motivated from the center. Sculpture of extension, centrifugal sculpture, is neither massive nor monolithic, nor does it present a continuous surface. Its elements are not oriented to a center nor are they projections from a central mass. Where sculpture had been solid, closed, it is now an art of open, airy, discontinuous forms, suspended in space.

The very act by which the *sculptor as carver* cut into a mass, freeing from it the mass within, was a movement from outside toward a predictable surface resting upon a solid core. Similarly, the *sculptor as modeler* worked out to the preconceived surface from a core upon which it rested. In either case, the meaning of the surface was a result of the forces lying within the core. When the columns at the portals of the Gothic cathedrals came to life or when the monolith was chipped to uncover the enduring calm of the god-king of Egypt, or bronze was cast into the likeness of the warrior-hero, it was, by and large, an opaque solid which carried the measure of either human or transcendent meaning on its surface. In those modeled or carved sculptures the surface is motivated and interpreted in the same way in which the hardened waves of lava reveal the forces which produced them. The continuous surface was the means of exchange, the meeting place where the forces within were made known to the spectator through color and surface variation, outline and gesture. These he read in the given terms of the culture of his time. Thus, Michelangelo's Moses, with its tense and active surface, reveals in every movement the inner forces of moral and wrathful intelligence. And the smile of the Angel of Reims is the expression of the knowledge of God.

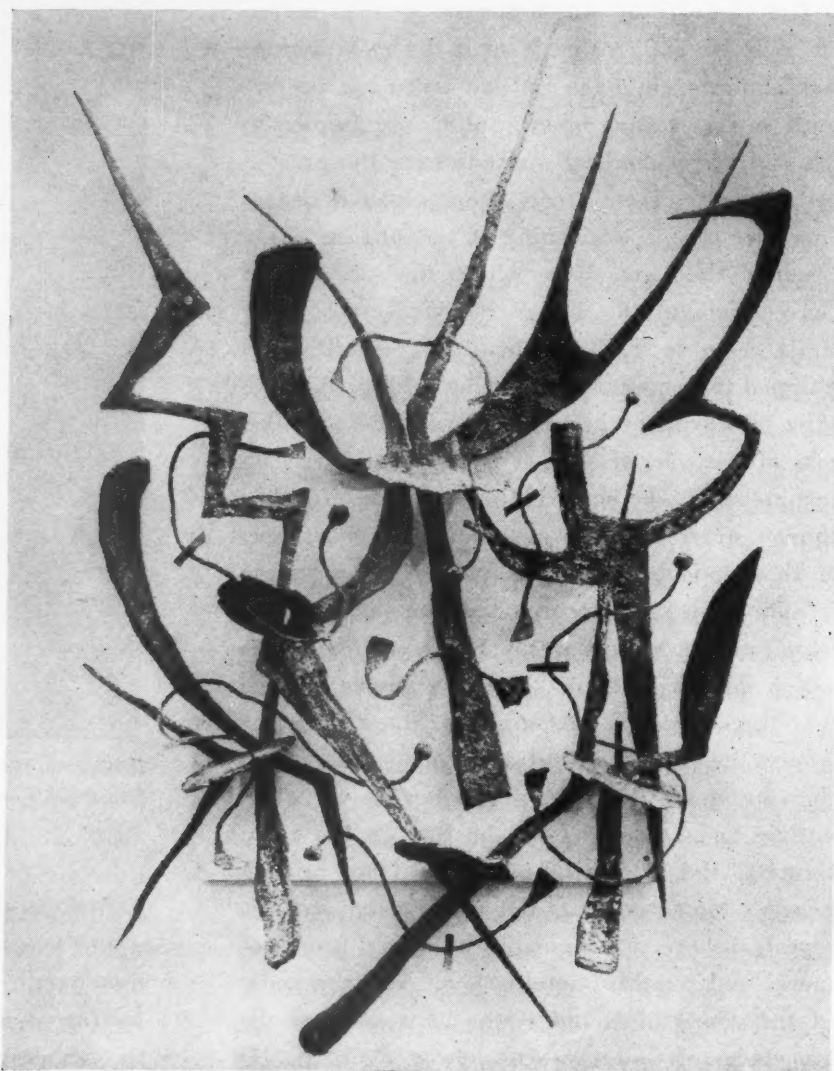


HERBERT FERBER: *Flame*, lead and brass, 1949  
Whitney Museum of American Art, New York

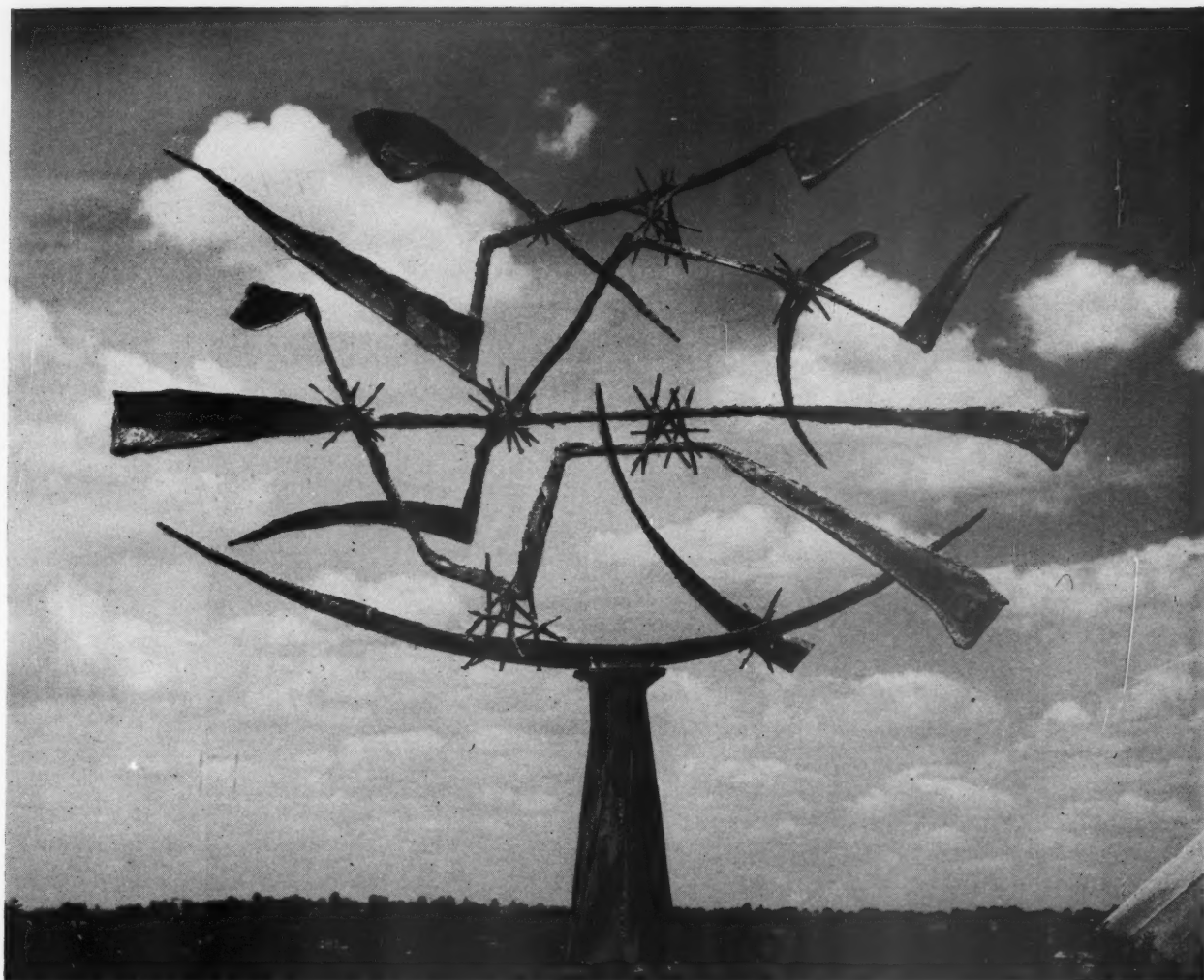
Michelangelo's dictum that a good sculpture would lose nothing of importance if rolled down a mountain could never have retained its authority for so long if it had not been assumed that the unbroken mass of the work contained the



HERBERT FERBER: Green Sculpture, copper, 1954  
Kootz Gallery, New York



HERBERT FERBER  
Wall Sculpture, copper and lead, 1953  
Kootz Gallery, New York



HERBERT FERBER: Flat Sculpture, copper, brass and lead, 1953. Kootz Gallery, New York

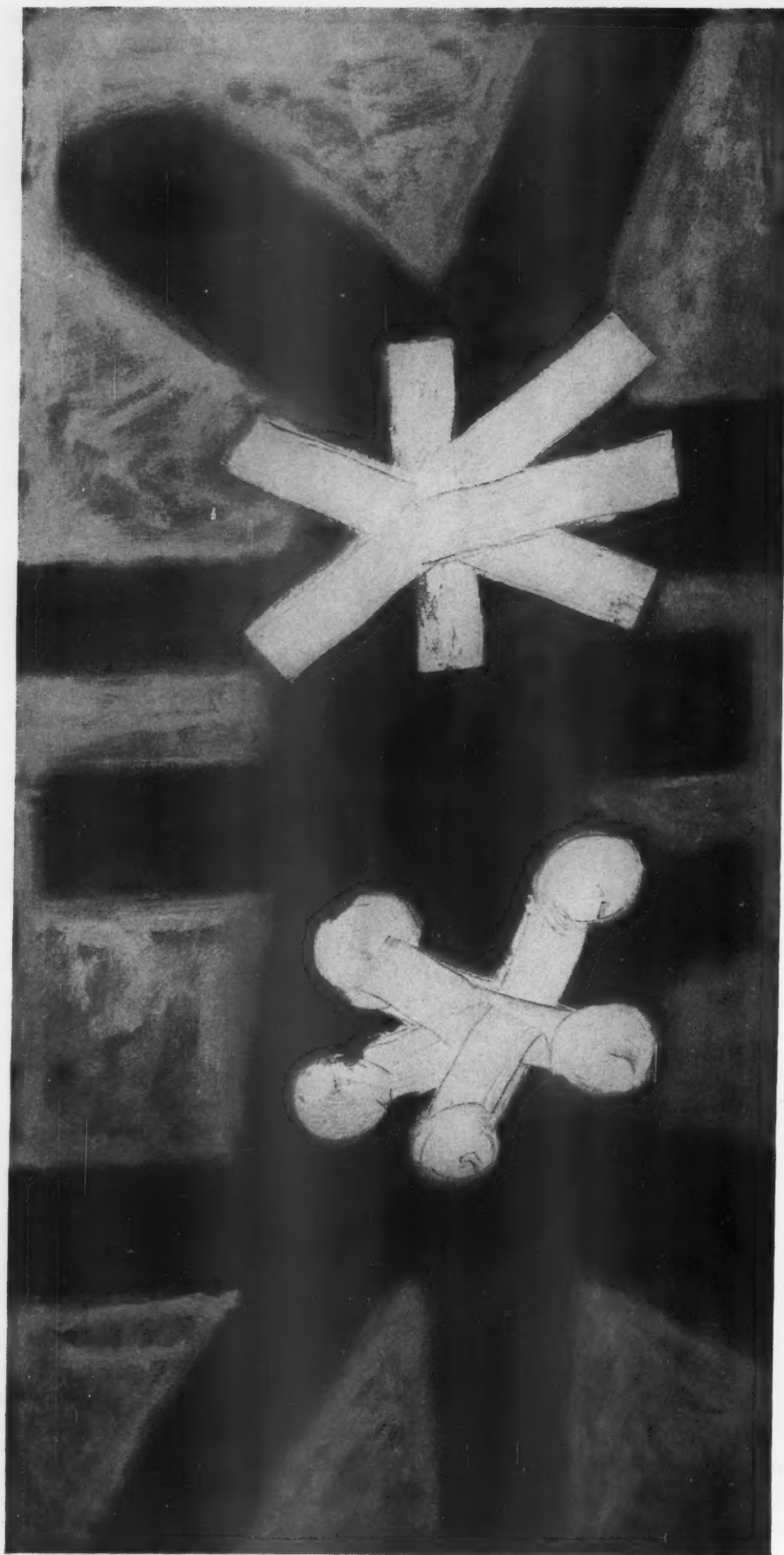
essential esthetic idea. Rather than by this rule, the new sculpture might be tested by its ability to withstand a hurricane because it offers so little surface. It resembles the open summits of Gothic towers more than the statues of Gothic portals. Its esthetic body is the relationship of solids and spaces which define each other. Space is not displaced, the mark of traditional sculpture; rather is it pierced and held in tension. Spaces and shapes form a complex, of which the parts are, of course, interdependent, but not centered. This sculpture of extension does not begin with the idea of removing the found surface in order to charge the revealed one with meaning. Nor does it work out from a core to a preconceived surface. Rather this sculpture may be said to have abandoned the idea of surface altogether so that instead of enclosing a volume its shape allows the free use of spaces as essential parts of the sculp-

ture. One becomes involved with these spaces, as if there were a kinetic compulsion to move into and about them. The eye no longer plays over a surface. There is no longer the constraint to think of front and back any more than there is in looking at a tree or landscape. Without recourse to illusionism sculpture has become truly spatial.

This, I think, is the essence of the new sculpture, and a key to its strength and exuberance. The solid forms of much contemporary sculpture, even if non-representational, are still bound by the limitations of tradition and do not participate, in my opinion, in the surge of this liberating concept.

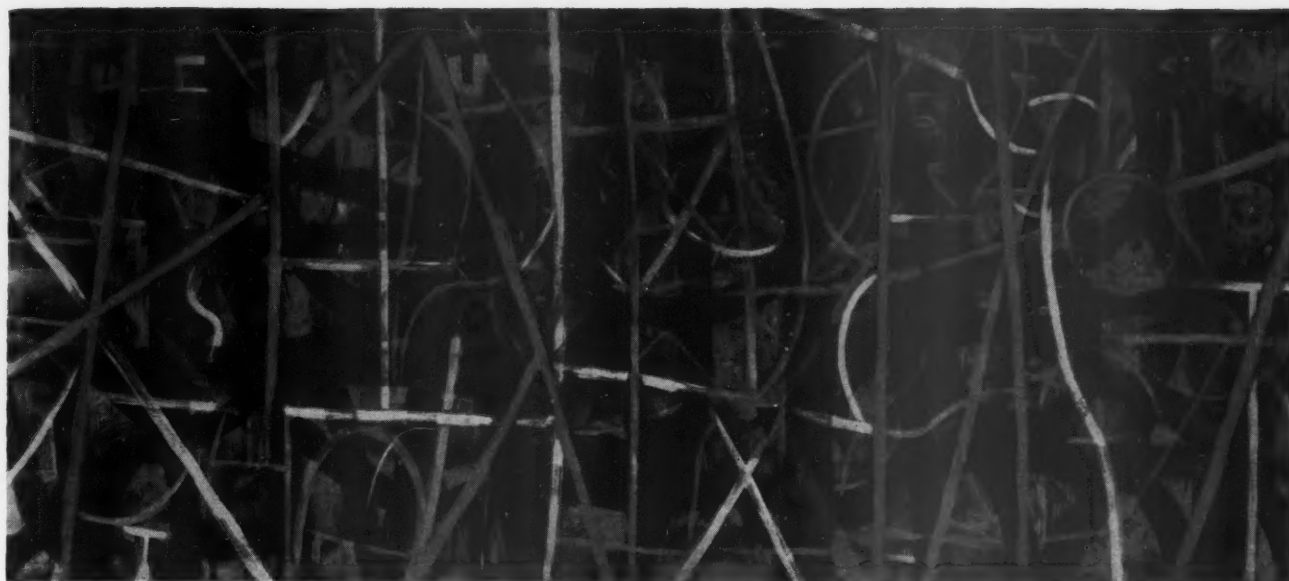
But a new form alone does not produce a meaning nor guarantee a work of art. Now, as always, the artist is concerned with fusing a private vision with form, with [continued on page 307]





ADOLPH GÖTTLIEB: *W*, oil with sand, 1954  
*Kootz Gallery, New York*





ADOLPH GOTTLIEB: *Labyrinth*, oil, 1954. Kootz Gallery, New York

## The Artist and the Public

BY ADOLF GOTTLIEB

The difficulties that confront the artist in relation to society today are familiar enough. I shall therefore sketch only very briefly my personal attitude to the present state of affairs, which might be summed up, though perhaps not clarified, as follows. The artist is in a jungle and his fundamental problem is survival. Young artists find themselves helpless in a brutally predatory society. They have not been trained to defend themselves, and as a rule they are quickly devoured. Contrary to popular opinion the artist is not utterly irresponsible, in fact he is the only member of society who accepts complete responsibility for the creation of art. In relation to creative problems it is society which is irresponsible.

I must confess that I feel a certain reticence about commenting on this problem simply because when I was a boy studying art, I became aware of and accepted the difficulties of the modern artist. By the age of 18, I clearly understood that the artist in our society can not expect to make a living from art; must live in the midst of a hostile environment; cannot communicate through his art with more than a few people; and if his work is significant, cannot achieve

recognition until the end of his life (if he is lucky), and more likely posthumously.

In the years that have intervened some of these dismal attitudes have been modified by events. Since that time there have been vast changes in the world and I too have changed. Having had such a gloomy outlook at the start, any improvement in my situation was entirely unexpected. Even now when I sell a picture, I am rather surprised — that is surprised that any one should like it well enough to buy it.

Among the heroes of my youth, who also at that time appeared as mythical giants, were Cezanne, Van Gogh and the many others who were the symbol of the defiant and heroic artist in a world of Philistines. Therefore, when in recent years there was so much public hand-wringing over the alienation of the artist from society, I had rather mixed feelings. It seemed odd to hear so much wailing when I had been brought up to accept the idea that it was the destiny of the artist, in our time, to be quietly dedicated to the values of art, and to be equally dedicated to a resistance to the stony ignorance of aesthetic illiterates.

I now find in 1954 that what has been a per-

sonal problem for me from the very beginning, and what is a personal problem for every artist I know, has become a sociological problem which seems to concern many people who are interested in art. I think I should say that I have no faith in any improvement, relating to the artist's situation, that stems from a sociological interest in the artist — paternalistic measures such as W.P.A.'s, state aid, or other well meant benevolent gestures. I am inclined to think that help for the artist and improvement of his situation can only come from the artist himself. Indeed the artist must depend upon his own resources in order to survive in a hostile environment.

I have tried to indicate that I was brought up to accept the life of an artist as something of a lost cause. It was rather astonishing to find around 1940 that not only did I no longer feel that the situation was hopeless but that on the contrary it was possible to feel quite hopeful. The hopefulness and renewed confidence came as a result of self-discovery. Feeling more confident, I felt it was possible not only to actively resist a stony-faced public, but also to realize that this monolithic audience was itself passive and therefore vulnerable. At about this time the prospects seemed so much brighter to me that it seemed important to separate any idea of frustration from the deficiencies of the general public. Some artists, I fear, fell into the trap of accepting the idea of alienation as an alibi for their own uncreativity.

This was a period of crisis and no doubt could be linked with the crisis that existed in other spheres. The crisis for me as an artist naturally involved re-evaluation of my work and also re-evaluation of my situation. It seems necessary to me to give this background, because I can only evaluate the present situation in relation to my past situations.

In the light of what has happened since 1940, I feel that the situation for the artist has improved with respect to the following factors:

1. The American artist does not suffer from a double standard — one standard for American art and another for European art — at least not to the same extent as before.

2. The American artist no longer has an inferiority complex in relation to Europe.

3. There are no contemporary artists of our own generation who have become such mythical figures that their shadows obliterate us.

4. There is a feeling of confidence that new areas in art can be explored and developed by us. No nation nor individual has a monopoly on art. Initiative, inventiveness and even stature are the property of those who have talent, wherever they may be.

5. Since we no longer have an inferiority complex, we no longer need be either chauvinists or expatriates.

Now as to the less hopeful side of the picture, it seems to me that many of the unpleasant aspects of the relationship of artist and public have not changed very much. One can still say that in America and Europe today the artist is to a large extent exposed to an ignorant, irresponsible and anonymous public whose innate or potential sensibility has been corrupted to the point where it is incapable of responding except to what is crass.

Having no practical or obviously useful justification, and not being tied to fundamental religious, political or social beliefs, the artist is footloose in a society which, when it does "use" art, usually does so on levels that to the artist are contemptible.

The artist's difficulty is aggravated when every man is considered a potential purchaser of art, providing he has the money required. Then every man has the right to be his own art critic, because he has the right to spend his own money as he sees fit. If art is thrown into the open market as a commodity, and so it is, then it is in competition with television sets, sports cars, etc. In this situation art is simply at the mercy of the lowest common denominator of aesthetic response, and criticism degenerates into buying or not buying.

This situation is the obstacle that confronts the artist and is responsible for his economic difficulties, his feeling of being alone, and his frequent feeling that his greatest efforts may be merely a mumbling to himself. The counter-complaint is that the artist today is unintelligible and is expressing himself in terms that the average person can not understand. Whether people actually need art at all seems to me questionable. It

ADOLPH GOTTLIEB  
 Evil Omen, oil, 1946  
 Mr. and Mrs. Roy R. Neuberger  
 New York



seems that today certain individuals need art, but society or people in the mass get along quite well without art. There certainly is no evidence that art in the past had any social acceptance unless it was tied to widely accepted social, religious or political beliefs. In order to be tied to such beliefs there must exist images that relate to the belief. *The idea of democracy has no images, just as the Jewish religion has no images and Mohammedanism has no images.* Obviously neither Jews nor Mohammedans ever developed an art fully related to their basic beliefs. It is quite conceivable that democracy can exist for an indefinite period, just as Mohammedanism has, without ever feeling the need for pictorial expression of its basic tenets.

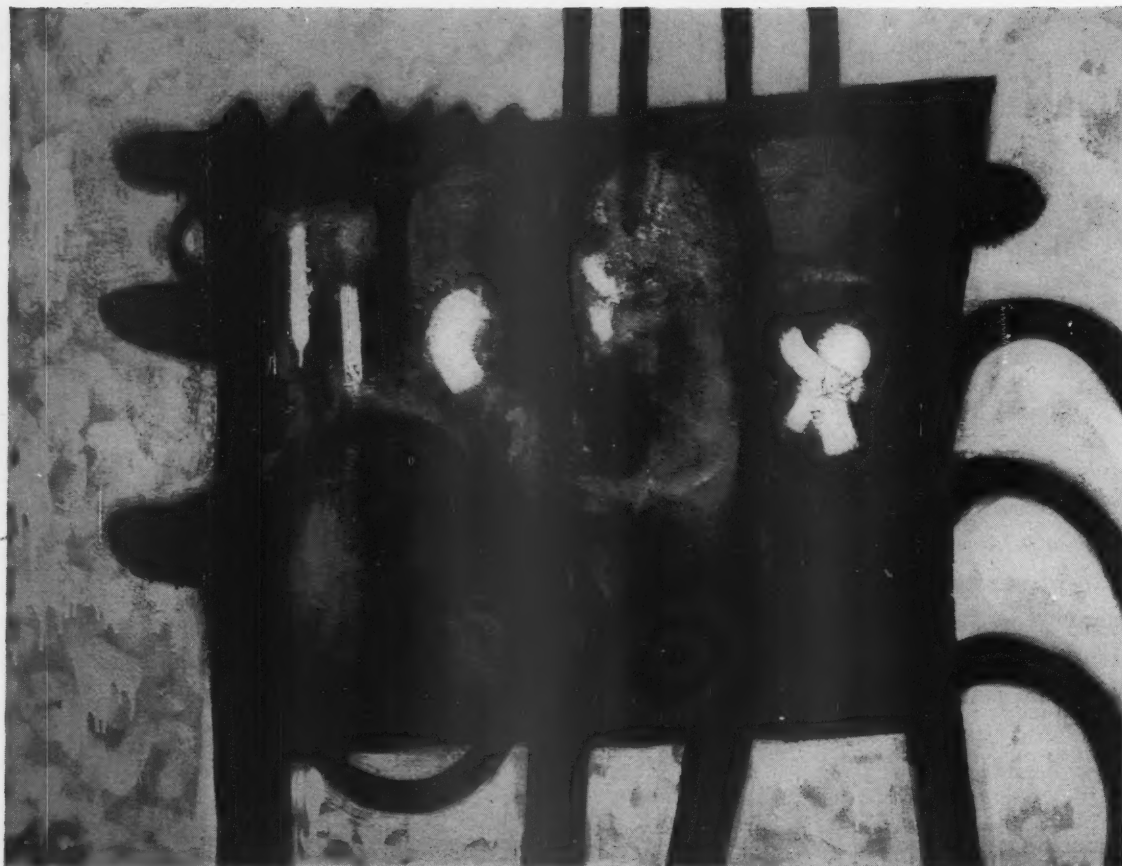
There is, however, a sentimental attitude that

longs for a reconciliation between artist and public in the false hope that the artist can, in some nebulous fashion, be in touch with the grass roots of human aspirations. Of course the artist expresses the *ideal* aspirations of every man, but every man will never see this unless the artist produces something obviously useful in relation to these aspirations.

The notion of an organic society within which the artist could exist harmoniously is a Utopian fantasy, if there is no specific idea of how the artist would be used. In addition to intrinsic merit, art must have relevance to needs. Society has specific needs just as individuals have specific needs, and neither society nor individuals can use art that is irrelevant to their needs.

If I refer to art in relation to needs, or the





ADOLPH GOTTLIEB: *Unstill Life*, oil, 1952. Alfred Jaretzki, Jr., New York

artist in relation to usefulness, I am not referring only to an obvious utilitarianism or the applied arts. Industrial designers are adjusted to the requirements of the machine and marketing techniques. On a different level, Van Dyck was adjusted to his patron's need for flattering likeness that would preserve for posterity the image of the man of distinction. When Rembrandt stopped flattering his sitters, he was swiftly punished and so he became the prototype of the modern artist. The modern artist does not paint in relation to public needs or social needs — he paints only in relation to his own needs. *And then he finds that there are isolated individuals, who respond to his work.*

In stating that social acceptance of the artist is only conceivable on a basis of usefulness and relevance to specific needs, I have in mind some personal experience that has made the matter clearer to me.

During the past few years my extra-curricular activity has involved me in collaborations with architects. At the present time I am working

on a stained glass facade that poses some unusual technical problems. Technical problems, however, are only half the issue, the other half being social problems.

Because the buildings in each case have been semi-public, the pertinent question is, how could an average group of people, typical of our mass culture, accept my art which seems to them esoteric and unintelligible?

The answer lies in the following facts: First, the commissioned works were useful and necessary objects or parts of a building. Secondly, people were confronted with the completed work after it was installed and paid for, thus seeing it in its proper context as part of the building. Third, the work has the stamp of approval of the duly constituted authorities.

Since in each case I had complete freedom to work as I pleased, one would expect repercussions. Curiously enough, the people were pleased. I am certain if they had known in advance that a wild abstractionist was to decorate their building, the project would have been stopped. But



the average man does not follow conflicts of schools of art, nor is he aware of degrees of extremism. Apparently he can accept quite extreme art if an authority he respects tells him it is good. I wish to make it clear that I am not advocating authoritarianism. I am speaking only about the acceptance of expert advice. In this sense it seems to me excellent to have a situation in which an informed opinion concerning art is respected by people who have no ability to evaluate art. At least they will be exposed to art on a higher level than they would select for themselves.

I have attempted to explain the conditions that enabled people to accept work they would normally reject. However, the greatest difficulty is to get the commissions first, after which acceptance may be possible. It is clear that if the work had not seemed useful or necessary or significant as part of the building, the commissions would not have been awarded.

From this experience it does not seem to me that a few architectural commissions indicate complete understanding and acceptance of the artist. What we do have is limited understanding and tolerance because the artist is useful. Perhaps this is as much as can be expected under present conditions. However, this experience has driven home to me more than ever the gulf between my aims as an artist and the desires of the average man.

Dr. Max Schoen of Coe College recently declared in a panel discussion arranged by the College Art Association that "the conditions in society that help or hinder the artist may constitute a barometer of the humane atmosphere of society." While I entirely agree with Dr. Schoen, one can also state that there is no necessary connection between the humane atmosphere at any given time and the quality of the art produced. The difficulties that the artist may have to endure no doubt indicate the degree of his alienation from society (or society's degree of humaneness). Yet we have no explanation of why, in the face of numerous difficulties that the artist has suffered in the past 100 years, a remarkably impressive body of art has been produced.

If there is a feeling of liberation, discovery and adventure in art today, it is because the artist to a certain extent makes the situation as well as being caught in it. Such an artist feels that if his total situation is bad, he is the only one who can improve it. The worst possible situation for me would be to paint bad pictures. No social improvements could remedy that. By painting well, I improve my total situation and if I can not have a new car, or even any car, this is not very important. If I paint pictures that express my own uniqueness, this may have some relevance to the uniqueness of our time, even though my paintings are significant to only a few individuals. I have no desire to be a happy integrated artist like the artist-artisans of the middle ages, because one cannot disengage the artist from the total situation, and had I lived in the middle ages I might not have been permitted to be an artist. Today in our society I am an artist because I choose to be one.

I choose to be an artist and I alone decide if I wish to take the consequences. Every youngster knows that the consequences are dismal, yet thousands enter the field. The hopeful aspect, for them and for me, is that the situation for us is open. In an open situation, the artist can at least display initiative, assert the pure values of art, and exercise his freedom. In the totalitarian world the situation is closed because of repression. To suggest that a sluggish, materialistic public, or our industrial system, or the Know-Nothingism of our McCarthys, or that any social manifestation other than outright repression hampers creativity might seem plausible, were it not for the impressive body of creative work this side of the iron curtain. This might indicate that art thrives not only on freedom, but on alienation as well.

I shall conclude by saying that the path of the artist today is full of obstacles, and yet his hope lies in being able to utilize obstacles. Furthermore, I prefer being what I am, in a situation that I know, to imagining myself in any better hypothetical situation of either the past or the future.

ED. NOTE: *Mr. Gottlieb's statement is a revision of a paper read by him at the annual meeting of the College Art Association of America in Philadelphia last January.*

# Government and the Arts

BY LLOYD GOODRICH

In the past three or four years there has been more thinking and action in the field of governmental relations to art than in the preceding decade. Among the causes are the end of wartime restrictions, the resumption of government building, increasing internationalism, more searching comparisons between ourselves and other nations, and a growing realization of the importance of international cultural relations. We have become aware that in spite of American creative contributions, past and present, our national government gives less recognition to the fine arts than many smaller and poorer European nations. Among the results are three recent plans: one from the art world, and two from governmental sources, executive and legislative.

Historically, the chief support of art in the United States has been private (this word being used to include not only individuals but corporations and institutions based on private capital). Our long tradition of individualism and personal initiative, our distrust of centralized authority, and the huge accumulation of private capital in this country, have combined to keep governmental activity in art to a minimum. But during the past fifty years this pattern has begun to change, especially at the state and community levels; for example, the growing art programs of state universities, and the increasing municipal support of museums. By comparison, federal art activities have shown little change. Notable exceptions were the various art projects of the Roosevelt administration in the 1930's, the most ambitious and in many ways the most democratic and intelligent art programs undertaken by any modern nation. Being largely a product of the depression, however, they did not survive its end. Since 1940 federal art activities, except for international cultural exchanges, have reverted to their former status in scale and conservatism.

The question of how far any government should enter the field of art is one on which there are wide differences of opinion. Yet most people would agree that there are certain essential func-

tions which only the federal government can perform, or which it can perform better than other agencies — most of which, indeed, it has performed since its beginning. These include the architecture of federal buildings, and their decoration and landscaping; the city of Washington itself, one of the few planned cities in this country; the design of coins, currency and stamps; the maintenance of art collections belonging to the nation; and international art exchanges. Whether these essential functions are being performed well or badly is a matter of vital public concern.

A general feeling in the art world of the inadequacy of our national art policies led in 1948 to the formation of the Committee on Government and Art, composed of three delegates each from twelve of the leading national art organizations representing various professional fields. In 1950 the Committee and its participating organizations adopted a resolution requesting the President to appoint a commission to study the whole problem. This resolution was officially endorsed by a large proportion of the country's museums, college art departments, and art associations. Before it could be submitted to him, President Truman authorized the Commission of Fine Arts in Washington, the chief federal art agency, to undertake such a study.

The Commission's report, *Art and Government*, published in 1953, was a survey of existing governmental art activities and agencies, with some recommendations for their improvement. Its stated objectives were constructive and left little ground for differences of opinion, especially in the areas of international art exchanges, decoration of federal buildings, and maintenance of the nation's art collections. But the means proposed to attain these objectives seldom seemed adequate. The report suggested few basic changes in organization or methods which would effect substantial improvements. It avoided the question of the architecture of federal buildings, one of the most important federal art problems. It declined to

accept responsibility on behalf of the Commission for the selection of artists to decorate public buildings. It proposed that international art exchanges be handled by an office established in the National Gallery of Art, with no provision for broader representation of the art world. In general the report, excellent as were its aims, was a reaffirmation of the status quo.

Following the publication of the report, the Committee on Government and Art undertook a report of its own for submission to the President. At a series of meetings in the winter of 1953/4 this report was drafted, discussed thoroughly, rewritten several times, and in the end unanimously approved. It was then submitted to each of the twelve participating organizations, all but one of which approved it, in most cases by unanimous or near-unanimous votes of their governing bodies. (The only dissenter, the National Academy of Design, later endorsed the report of the Commission of Fine Arts, with a few suggested changes.) The report of the Committee on Government and Art is thus the result of thorough consideration by the broadest, most representative body so far formed in this country to study governmental art activities. It was submitted to the President in May 1954, and is now under review by the Bureau of the Budget.

The report is based on the assumption that the chief support of art in this country in the foreseeable future, barring another major depression, will continue to come from private sources; and that the primary aim of governmental action in art should be, not subsidizing the art world nor supporting artists, but the use of art by the government for public purposes. The report defines what seem essential federal art functions, and presents proposals to improve them and to expand them where necessary. It expresses a belief that the highest artistic standards should govern such activities, and that official art policies should represent the best knowledge and experience of the art world. It proposes that these policies should be guided by bodies which are predominantly professional, which are free from political influence, and which include the broadest possible viewpoints; and that the art world should be given a voice in nominating their members. Recognizing the great diversity of contemporary art

and the danger of too much power in a few hands, it favors a decentralized rather than a centralized system: instead of a single body to govern all federal art programs, it proposes several independent advisory bodies, but with a central committee to consult on common problems. It recommends five such advisory commissions (two of which are already in existence) to cover the main fields of activity: one on the architectural design of federal buildings; one on the decoration of such buildings; the Commission of Fine Arts, to advise on architectural and artistic matters in the District of Columbia, and on certain art functions centered in Washington; the Smithsonian Art Commission, to advise the National Collection of Fine Arts; and an advisory commission on international art exchanges. To insure that these commissions should represent the best professional opinion, as far as possible, a system is proposed by which leading national art organizations would submit nominations for members representing their respective fields. In other words, the report applies the principle of representative government to our national art activities. Based on existing agencies and procedures, and proposing no new large-scale agency nor any large appropriation, it is a realistic plan for the extension and improvement of essential governmental art functions, making use of the best available professional advice. It is to be hoped that these basic principles may become an integral part of any future long-range government plan.

Another approach, from the legislative side, appears in the various bills introduced in the last two years by Representative Charles R. Howell of New Jersey, one of the few members of Congress who show an awareness of the value of the fine arts in our national life. His bills, perhaps influenced by the example of the British Arts Council, cover not only the plastic arts but literature, music, theater, ballet, motion picture, radio and television. They are products of evolution, for Mr. Howell has sought suggestions and criticisms from many sources. Starting with an omnibus bill for the general encouragement of the fine arts, he proposed a national commission with extremely broad powers, including various miscellaneous projects such as establishing a national theater and music [continued on page 308]





1952 Pittsburgh International Exhibition of Contemporary Painting

## The Pittsburgh International . . . *Past and Future*

BY GORDON BAILEY WASHBURN

It has not been generally recognized that the Department of Fine Arts of the Carnegie Institute in Pittsburgh is actually the oldest "museum of modern art" in America. People have presumed, without looking into the situation, that the Carnegie Institute had always concerned itself, like other civic museums, with historic as well as contemporary art. But actually, since the first Carnegie International in 1896, fifty-eight years ago, Pittsburgh has always concentrated its attention on current painting. Today its permanent collection, with little exception, consists of samplings from these annual exhibitions, the best part of which (as we now see it) are the American pictures. As a result the range of the collection is from Winslow Homer (*The Wreck*, bought in 1896) to Jackson Pollock (*No. 4, 1950*, given in 1953).

The use and value of such a specialization in contemporary artistry was more obvious twenty years ago than it is today. No other American

institution was then offering an annual review of such newsworthy interest nor had other American museums or the New York dealers taken to importing many works of the younger foreign painters until the Museum of Modern Art in New York began to encourage the practice. Pittsburgh still scoops the country in presenting rising stars in the European firmament and it also introduces new American talent — but it no longer is alone in its earlier and more useful role of keeping America informed of foreign developments in art. In New York, the central art market of the country, museums and dealers now import the work of most of the prominent Europeans as a matter of course. Thanks to the airplane, Europe is only a day away, and her best artists are often better known to us than those working in California.

Should the Pittsburgh International be continued on an annual basis? Its trustees have pondered this question. What values remain to it



now that it is no longer the only source of enlightenment in its field and cannot claim all of its former national prestige?

But these are not the only questions that have occurred. There is also a growing awareness that, in its specialization, the Carnegie Institute has been keeping its eggs in a single basket and that, besides, its community is in need of a more varied diet. Perhaps, it is thought, it should now undertake to build up a program of exhibitions and accessioning that would embrace the historic or traditional arts, both Fine and Useful. Could money be raised for such a drastic shift of programming at this difficult moment of restricted private incomes? What should be decided, moreover, about the International itself, paid for in its entirety ever since the war by a three-year grant from a foundation?

A first answer was to announce in 1950 that the International would be a biennial; a second, given more recently, that every three years should be often enough for Pittsburgh's review of the current trends and achievements in international painting. The last International was in 1952; the next, therefore, will open in October, 1955. Thus, it has become a triennial, leaving to Venice and São Paulo (neither of which offers its International as the chief effort of its only civic museum), to fulfill their biennial duties as the world's largest fairs of contemporary art.

No question has arisen regarding the mode of choosing material for the Pittsburgh International. This will remain the critical choice of the Director of the Department of Fine Arts. There have appeared, however, a multitude of other considerations and observations, a few of which are worthy of note.

To what extent, we may all wonder, does such a traditional exhibition affect its community as a whole and its professional artists? To the present observer its effect is far less apparent than one might expect. Our local Pittsburgh painters have embraced the newer trends and tendencies with notable reluctance as compared to artists in such cities as San Francisco, Los Angeles, or New York, in spite of their equal opportunities to feel and know the pressures or prevailing winds, the urge of emotional currents. Sophistication, at any rate, has not been seized

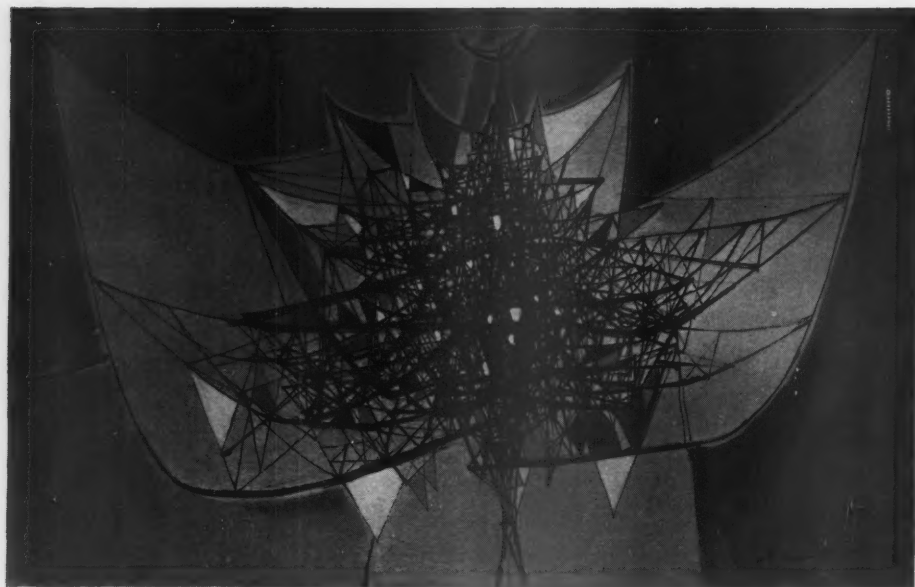
upon, whatever the opportunity. In view of this fact one wishes that their conservative models in our own galleries might sooner have been augmented to include not only a Hopper, Benton, Homer, or Chase, but also a Renoir, Degas, Cézanne and such distinguished predecessors as Rubens, Pontormo, and Delacroix or Courbet, to mention only a few links with the permanent traditions in painting.

Similarly we may note that Internationals in Pittsburgh have developed no urge to collect — even old masters, unless the collections of Mr. Henry Clay Frick and Mr. Andrew Mellon, made *in absentia*, may partially be regarded as reflections and reactions to contemporary idioms. Certainly but little purchasing of modern art seems to have been undertaken, as only one collection has been made in Pittsburgh.

Should the Pittsburgh International, we have asked ourselves, continue to offer single examples of the artists of its choice, a sampler of 305 different stitches, or should it reduce the number of artists represented by a half or a third, and



JAMES BROOKS: M-1951, oil  
Collection of the Artist



RICHARD KOPPE: *Winged Web*  
Oil, 1952  
*Richard M. Hunt, New York*

present two or three paintings by each of them? Should it, moreover, interject small one-man side shows? Over the years, the Institute has experimented with a variety of solutions but has, on the whole, stuck to the "sampler" solution. On the occasion of the last show, in 1952, a handful of newly introduced painters were represented by two pictures. Should all be — or none?

The answer, as I now see it, is that we have not the room either for one-man shows or for double or triple billings. Were we able to undertake shows of the mammoth size now offered both by Venice and São Paulo, we should welcome their schemes of obtaining both depth and variety within their immense exhibitions. But it must be remembered that we have room for no more than about 300 works of art, as compared to Venice's 3,000+ and São Paulo's 4,000. We can do no better, I think, than stick to our scheme of sampling, however hard it may continue to make it for the visitor to come to grips with a painter through a single example of his work. Should we attempt anything else, our exhibition would, I fear, lose its real element of interest, its provocative value as an exploration in realm of new talents. Instead we would be forced to settle back upon a show of a few highly acceptable and well known painters who would be represented by several canvases year after year.

A third of our exhibition, as everyone knows, has traditionally been given to American art. This, for obvious reasons, has always been the

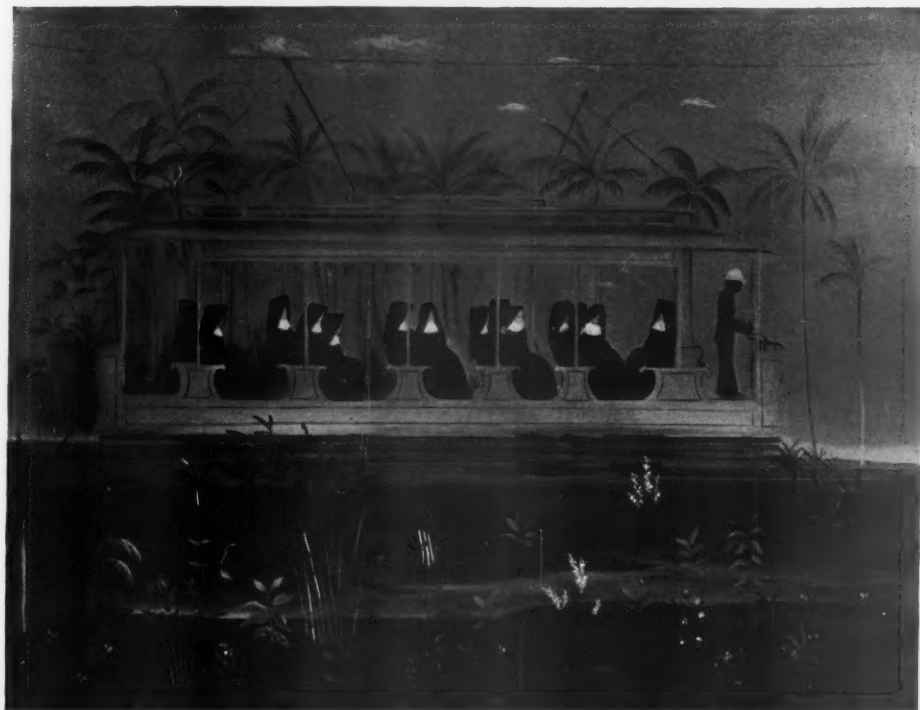
most difficult to gather. Many excellent painters, painters of really outstanding worth, are not represented by any New York dealer and may be found only in their native regions. Thanks to jury duty, invitations to lecture, or other chances for travel, I can now, in some measure at least, correct the injustice of falling back upon the New York market for the American section of the show. This is now made practical by reason of the years that fall between each exhibition where it was impossible when the International was an annual event.

In concluding these brief notes, it may not be amiss to note that the Pittsburgh International continues to excite the buying interest both of museums and collectors from all parts of the country. Out of 253 paintings for sale, 58 were bought in 1952, and the gross sales amounted to \$35,910. In fact, on the opening hour of our sales, buyers were literally standing in line to acquire the pictures of their choice. One museum alone obtained nine pictures for its modern section. Since the Carnegie management has traditionally paid the incoming cartage and avoided taking a commission, the cost of buying modern works of art in Pittsburgh has always been well below the market level. This fact may not be as well known as it ought to be.

ED. NOTE: *The illustrations for this article are typical examples of the American paintings exhibited at the 1952 Carnegie International.*



**BRIAN CONNELLY:** *The Spectrum, a Painting in Four Acts: III. June Noon.* Oil, about 1950  
*Mr. and Mrs. J. C. Knee, Pittsburgh*



**MADELINE HEWES**  
*The Outing.* Oil, 1951  
*Charles J. Rosenbloom*  
*Pittsburgh*





Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, designed by Auguste L. Noel, completed 1954. Façade



# Trends and the Museum

BY JOHN I. H. BAUR

Stylistic trends are not very important from a museum's point of view. Sometimes an exhibition is built around such a trend, but this is an educational device and does not imply that other kinds of art are not equally significant — or so we have always felt at the Whitney. The museum's function is to discover quality; not to point the direction that the artist should follow, but to help him along any path that ascends. We are content to let movements take care of themselves, which of course they do anyway.

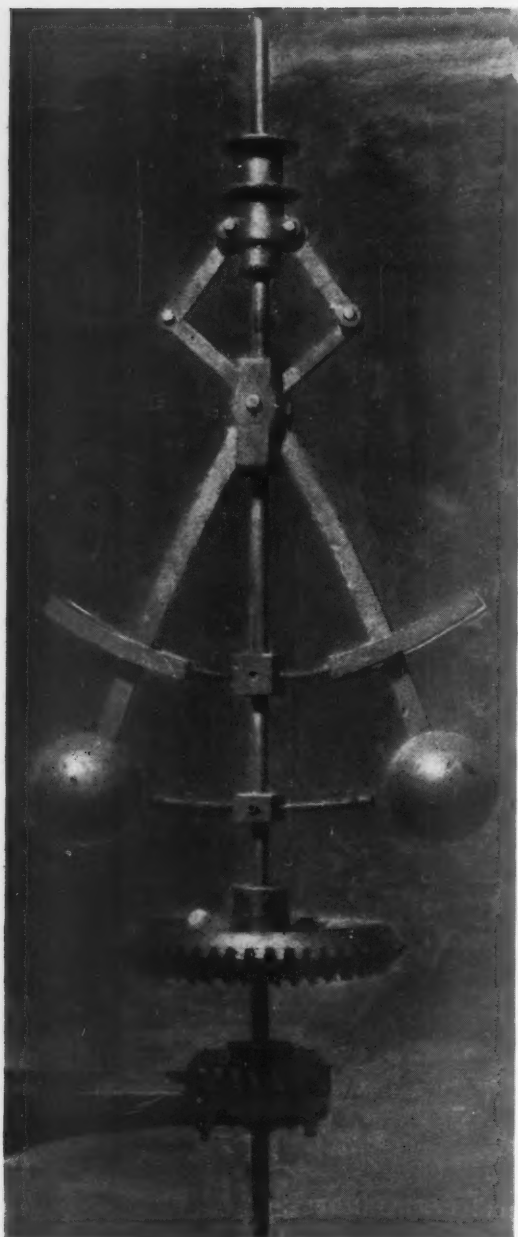
But there is another kind of trend with which we are vitally concerned, and that is one towards artistic maturity in the United States, towards higher quality and more of it. This is difficult to measure because qualitative standards are undefinable in the arts and, furthermore, because there is always a danger that sympathy with our own country and age may warp our critical faculties. Ninety-nine years ago *The Crayon*, America's first independent art magazine, complained of the "worse than idle puffery" lavished on painters by our newspapers, "until the name of an American artist has almost become a thing to be laughed at by European critics." And less than a year ago this writer was taken to task by an English reviewer for having squandered on two living American painters superlatives which should have been reserved for French artists alone.

If there is no impartial barometer to measure the qualitative rise in American art during the 20th century, there are nevertheless certain historical considerations which lend weight to our conviction that such a rise has indeed taken place. When the 20th century opened, the condition of American art was unimpressive. Our best painters then were Homer, Eakins and Ryder, all of whom were still working; but they were old men, or getting old, and their careers were drawing to a close. The middle generation, which should normally have been taking their places and forming the artistic character of the period, was one of the weakest we have ever produced. These were men whose formative years had been the 1880's

and '90's, men born, let us say, from 1855 to the end of the '60's. There was scarcely a first-rate name among them. Perhaps the best were Sargent, Prendergast, Davies, Henri, Luks and Myers. More typical were Tarbell, Benson, Hassam, Brush, Waugh, Melchers, Kenyon Cox and J. W. Alexander.

So we started the new century with a few great artists left over from the 19th, a polite blank in the middle and a suddenly rebellious group of young painters who found salvation either in a rediscovery of American life, as with *The Eight*, or else in the then-revolutionary movements of abstraction and expressionism, new-born abroad. Soon the old men died and, artistically speaking, only the young were left. Today a surprising number of them are still working, including Weber, Sheeler, Hopper, Burchfield, Feininger, Davis, O'Keeffe, Zorach. They are now the old generation in American art, and until quite recently one could have added to their names those of several other outstanding pioneers who are not long dead, such as Sloan, Marin and Dove. All of these artists started their careers about the time of the Armory Show, in any case before 1920. Since then three-and-one-half decades have passed, and every one of those decades has contributed just as many, if not more distinguished painters and sculptors to the number working today. By a process of simple arithmetic we have more fine artists at this moment than at any time in the century, and this is one factor in the notable flowering of American art in recent times.

By the same token, that process of cumulative growth is now over. The century's early generation is fast disappearing, and henceforth there will be a more normal ratio between birth and death in the creative arts. This means there will also be, if not a levelling-off, at least a less spectacular increase in the number of good artists working, although the growing population of the country and the increasing popularity of art as a vocation both promise to offset in part this tendency.



WALTER MURCH: *Governor, II*, oil, 1952  
*Whitney Museum of American Art, New York*

The new ratio between birth and death does not necessarily mean that there will be a leveling-off in quality. One of the great advantages conferred by our growing number of good artists has been a corresponding growth in critical standards — a claim which can be demonstrated in many ways, one (at the risk of immodesty) being the development of a museum like the Whitney. When its forerunner, the Whitney Studio Club, was founded by Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney early in the century, its admission policy was extremely lenient because its aim was to help the young, liberal, nonconforming artists in their revolt against academic standards. By 1930 that battle seemed won and the number of artists seeking admission to the club had grown far beyond its capacity. Mrs. Whitney's answer was a museum which resembled the club in many respects but with this important difference: its program was guided by standards which were directly related to the highest level of artistic competence in the country. Maintaining that level so that it will challenge each succeeding generation of young painters is one of the legitimate and useful ways in which a museum can affect not the direction but the quality of contemporary art.

While stylistic trends are not the principal concern of a museum, they are nevertheless reflected, almost automatically, in its purchases and exhibitions. Thus the Whitney annual of 1934 and that of 1954 were very different shows, the former heavily weighted with American Scene painting,

GEORGE TOOKER  
*The Subway*  
 Tempera, 1950  
*Whitney Museum  
 of American Art  
 New York*



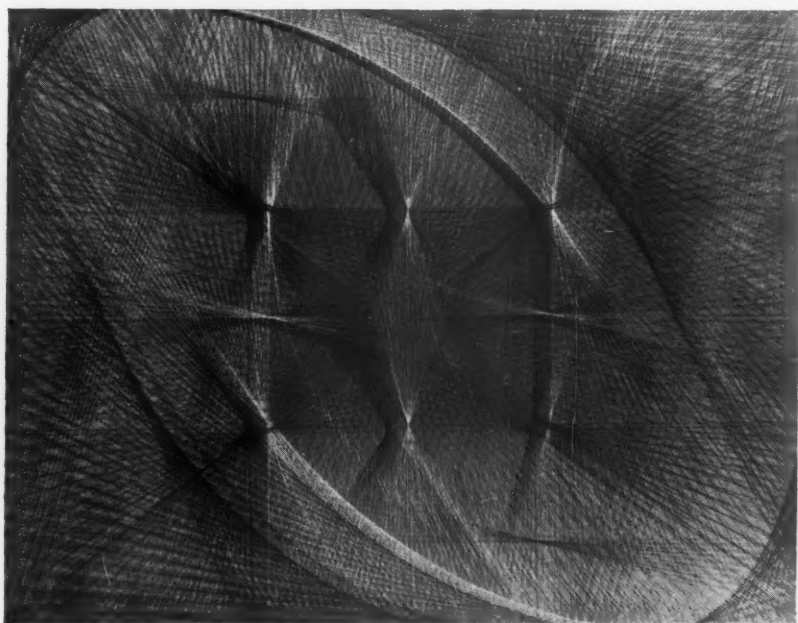
the latter with abstractions. But the point is that a preponderance of one style or another meant only that more creative artists seemed to us to be working in that direction at that time. No annual has ever been limited to a single movement, and the museum has always proclaimed, both in action and words, its faith in the diversity of modern American art, its belief that every major movement has some, though not necessarily equal, creative merit.

Many artists and a few critics disagree. They are honestly convinced that artistic salvation lies in one direction only — with the artist, naturally enough, his own. While this seems a narrow view, one cannot take it for granted that all our principal movements have been genuinely creative or that any one of them will continue to serve as a vital form of expression. In this respect, stylistic trends do concern the museum, not so much for themselves but because their power to attract and inspire creative minds has a direct relation to the museum's search for quality.

The causes of our artistic diversity, which is certainly greater today than at any time in the past, have been attributed to various forces, too complex to discuss here. But on a purely observable plane, that diversity has sprung from two factors; first, the great number of formal experiments which the 20th century has produced and,



HERBERT KATZMAN: *Two Nudes before Japanese Screen*  
Oil, 1952. *Whitney Museum of American Art, New York*



SUE FULLER  
*String Construction, Number 51*  
Plastic thread and aluminum, 1953  
*Whitney Museum of American Art*  
*New York*

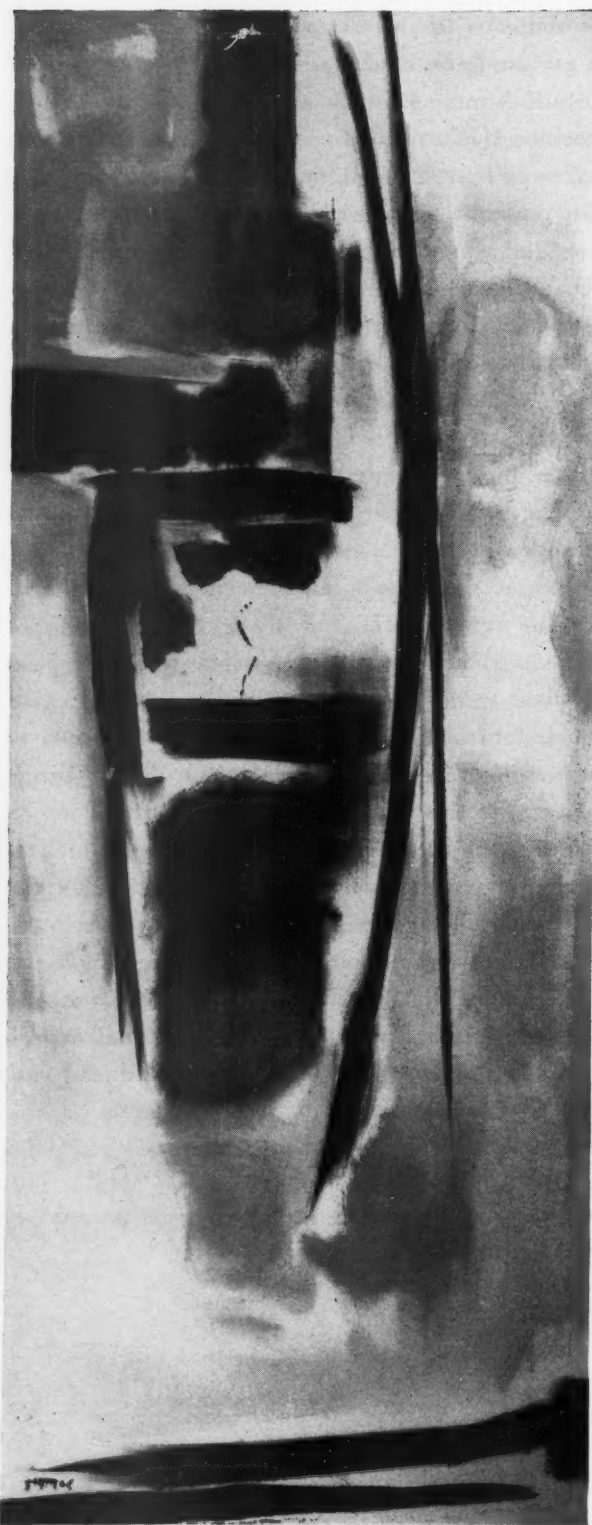


second, a new sensitivity on the part of our artists to the thought and the problems of contemporary life. The first factor has led us to explore all the multiple isms of European art and to devise many variants of our own. The second has produced a series of individual and group reactions to such diverse forces as economic depression, war, rural anti-intellectualism, and the four-dimensional world of modern physics — a variety of responses far beyond that in our 19th-century art.

Given this tendency towards diversity, the immediate cause for its steady growth during the 20th century is that same numerical accumulation of creative artists discussed above. This means that we have living with us today some of the pioneers of practically every movement which the century has produced; and many of them are still faithful to their original discoveries, still resisting the swing of the main current in other directions. It also means that, as these pioneers die, whole movements will vanish unless they have successfully enlisted the support of younger painters and sculptors with creative ability.

To what extent will this actually happen? Of course one cannot foretell, but an exhibition which the Whitney Museum is now preparing seems to indicate a considerable simplification in the pattern of our art. The exhibition will be devoted to about thirty-five painters and sculptors who have made their reputations in the last ten years — mostly young artists who are, in our opinion, the leading figures of a new generation. They were chosen without regard to style or trend, and it was only after their selection that we realized how many contemporary movements remained unrepresented. Among the painters, there was scarcely a single romantic realist, only a few expressionists (in representational form), no orthodox surrealists (though some who showed surrealist influence). The two largest groups comprised the so-called abstract expressionists and extreme realists. There was also a smaller group of abstract painters in other veins (though geometrical abstraction was notably neglected). Of the sculptors, almost all were abstract.

If we chose well, which only time can determine, the trend of the last ten years has been a double one towards stylistic extremes — towards



THEODOROS STAMOS: *Greek Orison*, oil, 1952  
Whitney Museum of American Art, New York

meticulous realism at one pole, abstract expressionism at the other. In the process, our intermediate styles appear to have lost their support to a considerable degree. This is not offered as a prediction of future [continued on page 310]



# Collecting American Art

BY ROY R. NEUBERGER

At a cross-road in the small town of Harrison, Maine, there is a sign-post to which are nailed directions to thirty-five summer camps. Just so many camps, or one might call them schools of painting, trending in all different directions, may be observed in the contemporary scene in America.

This was perhaps less true fifteen years ago, when we were still under the influence of the Depression Era portrayed in the work of the W.P.A., which was more intensely socially conscious, and when the abstract school had not yet developed to its fullest extent. At that time, when men like Ben Shahn, Jack Levine and Peter

Blume were producing their social commentaries, the group of romantic realists typified by John Steuart Curry, Thomas Benton and Grant Wood were also enjoying a wide audience. It is true that simultaneously Arthur Dove, Stuart Davis, John Marin and Marsden Hartley were moving in quite different directions and had an enthusiastic band of supporters, although somewhat less numerous.

The end of the depression, the beginning of the second World War and "Internationalism" changed and broadened the variety. Dozens of artists were solidifying their previous positions and a score of newcomers were beginning to assert



STUART DAVIS: *The Barber Shop*, oil, 1930. *Mr. and Mrs. Roy R. Neuberger, New York*



EDWARD HOPPER: *The Barber Shop*, oil, 1931. *Mr. and Mrs. Roy R. Neuberger, New York* (recent acquisition)



MARSDEN HARTLEY: *Fishermen's Last Supper*, oil, 1940-41. *Mr. and Mrs. Roy R. Neuberger, New York*



DAVID SMITH: *The Billiard Player*, steel, 1954. *Mr. and Mrs. Roy R. Neuberger, New York*

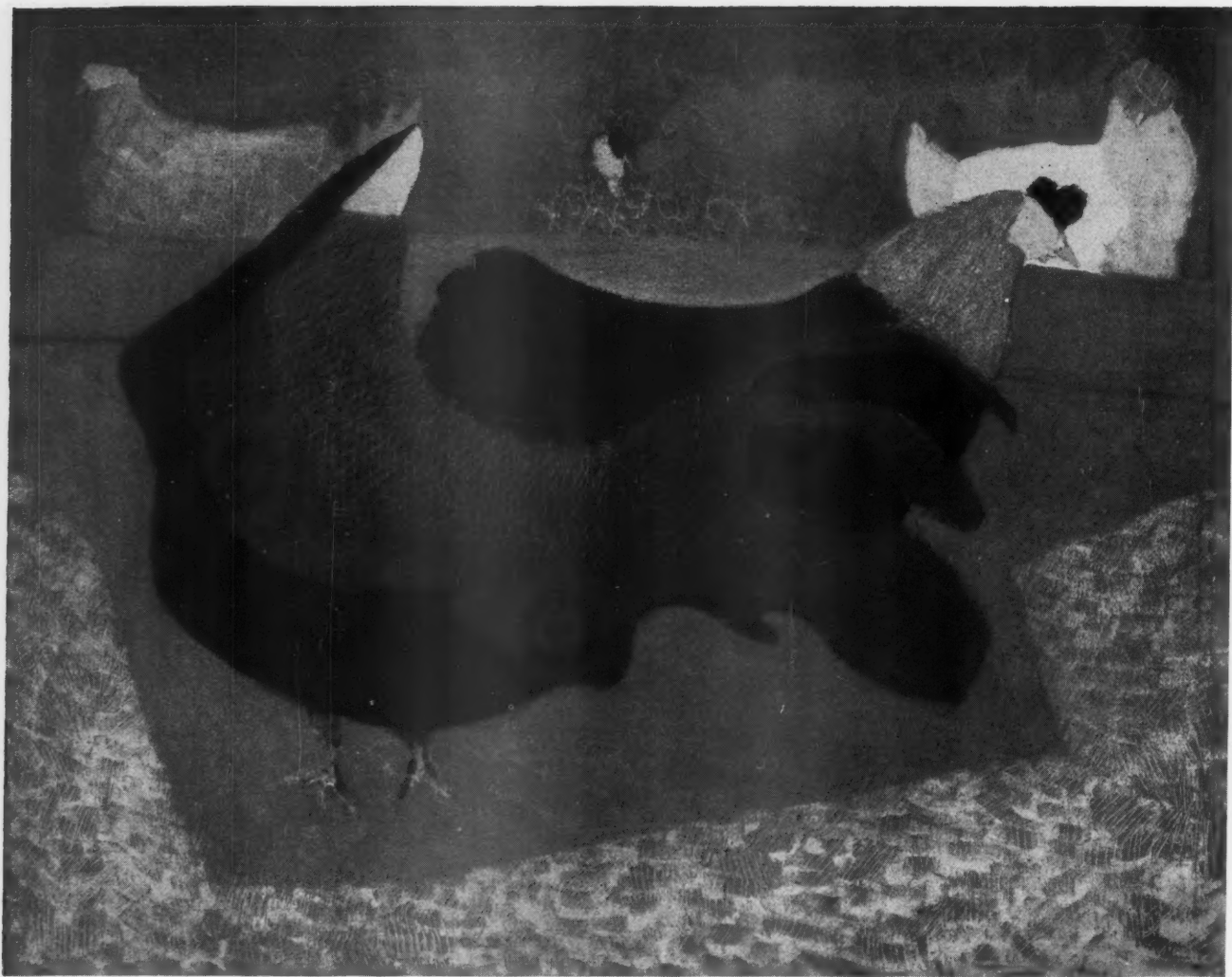
themselves.

There emerged a group of abstractionists which have held a discerning public interest: Baziotes' mystery world, the pictographs of Gottlieb, the exciting splashes of Jackson Pollock, the vigorous forms of Hofmann and other related dynamic artists caused many controversial battles which are still going on. The so-called abstract expressionists

were easier to take and were liked, and still are, by a host of collectors and onlookers.

While this was going on, a number of artists were moving in their own individual ways. Loren MacIver was painting the things that others neglected: votive lights, ash cans, window shades, clowns, aquaria. Niles Spencer was describing commercial scenes in his unemotional style.





MILTON AVERY: *Rooster's Domain*, oil, 1948. *Mr. and Mrs. Roy R. Neuberger, New York*

Sheeler was continuing his work as a perfectionist in painting cities and factories with an extraordinary draftsmanship. Milton Avery was describing, in joyful color and broad composition, the simpler aspects of life: conversations among people, picnics, musicians and landscapes. Although the earlier days of our history produced perhaps the greatest primitives, Horace Pippin painted some extraordinary canvases that won the hearts of the very sophisticated as well as the younger collectors. Edward Hopper continued to paint, throughout the period, a few canvases a year that, in total, could be called *Americana*, with their impeccable clarity mixed with nostalgia.

These developments and others were producing an ever-increasing audience, a great number of new galleries and important additions to museums and college collections. This stimulus has helped

the older artists to continue to improve and compete successfully with the so-called Avant-Garde. One of the most sensitive of these, painting quietly in New Jersey, is Lee Gatch, whose paint quality rivals the Redon of France's past and his soft impressions enchant the eye. His is a sure talent bound to win a wider audience.

The East by no means dominates the American scene. In particular, a strong school has developed in the Northwest. C. S. Price originally described the rugged area in subtle layers of pigment. Morris Graves, obviously influenced by closer proximity to the Orient, interprets the loneliness of birds. Mark Tobey, in a more abstract manner, depicts the terrain of country and city.

Each summer William Kienbusch goes for his inspiration to the territory so magnificently done by Marin. His gives a new character to the semi-wilderness in plastic media that makes one think



JACOB LAWRENCE: *A Christmas Pageant*, tempera, 1952. *Mr. and Mrs. Roy R. Neuberger, New York*

of Sibelius. Herbert Katzman, also young, oozes paint on canvas in a generous fashion but with a loving instinct that produces an admirable result. After several years in Rome on a scholarship, Seymour Drumlevitch, who teaches in Buffalo, is producing canvases of a more intellectual and less emotional variety than Katzman. He has painted the Italian scene in such a manner that one looks forward eagerly to his next output. A youngster influenced perhaps by the Byzantine period, has his own way of being modern: in his painting, Jonah Kinigstein strikes a visual and emotional impact reminiscent of the mosaics of Ravenna.

In the category of richness of paint quality, one's mind goes naturally to Hyman Bloom. In

spite of a subject matter that frightens the onlooker, the sheer eloquence, the strength of his brushwork and the superb quality of his draftsmanship tip the scales far in his favor. Another Boston artist, Jack Levine, first attracted attention when he was hardly over twenty. Still only in his thirties, he is winning new and favorable re-appraisal. He is a sort of Daumier of our time and his biting satires have a vivid impact.

On social commentary, more could be said about Ben Shahn, previously mentioned. Besides his ability to paint, he has a mind that understands the nature of human problems and relations. His conceptions are those of the mature artist and the fine human being. This combination will win for him a permanent place in the history of this

period's art.

We could talk of many others as the talent in this country, largely drawn from European ancestry, is beginning to feel its oats. Our economic successes permit a segment of our community to work at cultural activities. The release of inhibitions by the mere fact that one does not have to be a European to produce a work of art is working minor miracles throughout our land. Where do we go from here?

We have listed the names of artists but neglected to mention that it is the individual picture, after all, that counts. We have considered trends when, after all, it is the individual taste that counts. A good example of a good artist has the habit of becoming better known in a short time, and collectors and museums are constantly on the alert for something that has a universal appeal. On the subject of trends, one's individual taste

swings back and forth, rarely seeking a static, inflexible position. At times an abstraction appeals, at times a new subject-matter, and at times just an unexplained creation of a capable artist who knows the business of painting. Once the Impressionists were the avant-garde. Because of misappraisal of that time, the contemporary critic tries to be more generous of the possibilities of each new direction. More power to him! Let us appraise, however, on the basis of honest conceptions helped by knowledge, aided by intuition and above all abetted by love of the fine arts.

Lyonel Feininger is particularly exciting for a high quality of work done for over half a century in other countries as well as our own. After early days in America, he went to Paris and then spent a long while in Germany. Originally a cartoonist, he was one of the first to feel the influence of the Cubists. He has been a consistent user



WILLIAM KIENBUSCH: *Black Bush, Autumn Dogtown*, gouache, 1954. *Mr. and Mrs. Roy R. Neuberger, New York*





JACK LEVINE: *The Banquet*, oil, 1938. *Mr. and Mrs. Roy R. Neuberger, New York*

of lines and subtle relationships, and his work today has still the freshness of youth. His is the approach of the internationalist and yet the signature of Feininger calls for a calm craftsmanship with a mystery of streets and passages thrown in.

During the war, the Museum of Modern Art honored a young sailor. In the last ten or fifteen years, discerning museums and collectors have appreciated the work of Jacob Lawrence. His enemies call it illustration because you can tell what his meanings are, but his compositions abound in colorful strength.

Irene Rice-Pereira is a master of shapes and forms. Peering at her angles, rectangles and superimposed structures, one gets the feeling of the

vastness of the universe. Her views have no local meaning. They please the eye of those who do not demand a communication with every view. In using the third dimension, Rice-Pereira has moved forward from the point where Mondrian stopped.

A veteran who has had a long education in abstract trends both here and abroad is George L. K. Morris. He has borrowed the dark warm tones of Juan Gris and put them to work in his own understanding, intellectual way. Morris has an excellent comprehension of esthetics and expresses himself well in open discussion as well as on canvas.

Randall Morgan and John Heliker are two

young artists whose stays in Italy have had a profound effect on their styles. Their architectural panels of Italian towns are successful because the paint is pleasing, the shapes — arches, rectangles and other shapes — have the congenial harmony that provides exciting results.

Shifting back to one who uses his forms somewhat more abstractly, Hans Moller's clean-cut workmanship makes one's eye search the complete canvas. His perfection of color complements his linear understanding.

Alexander Calder combines a keen sense of humor with an ability to do things with his hands perhaps unparalleled anywhere in the world. His imagination created the sculpture that moves, the sculpture that playfully casts shadows on the walls to double their exciting values. David Smith seems to be more serious in vein. His beginnings in an iron foundry have made him so much at home with his medium that his sculptures in iron attain a delicacy rarely associated with that material.

There are many other artists we could discuss whose work we admire, but the above indicates the variety and the strength of the current American school.

This opens the question of why our own collecting has been limited to American artists. The European artists of the great traditions reflected to a large extent the economic and cultural life of their times. In the United States many people have emphasized the strength of our economy and the lack of culture existent in our land. It does not make one chauvinistic to disagree with this opinion. Americans are as sensitive to the beauties and mysteries of the arts as those of any other country. Pursuing this thought further, we found that in the past the more successful the economic trend, the more likely that a great esthetic creation would accompany it. Venice was the leader in trade in the time that her painters produced great expressions in color. This example is the rule rather than the reverse. Prosperity permits a segment of our population to pursue endeavors that do not merely add to our material comforts but satisfy demands that can be achieved only when there is a certain amount of leisure.

In the recent past the typical American was chiefly interested in the work of European art-

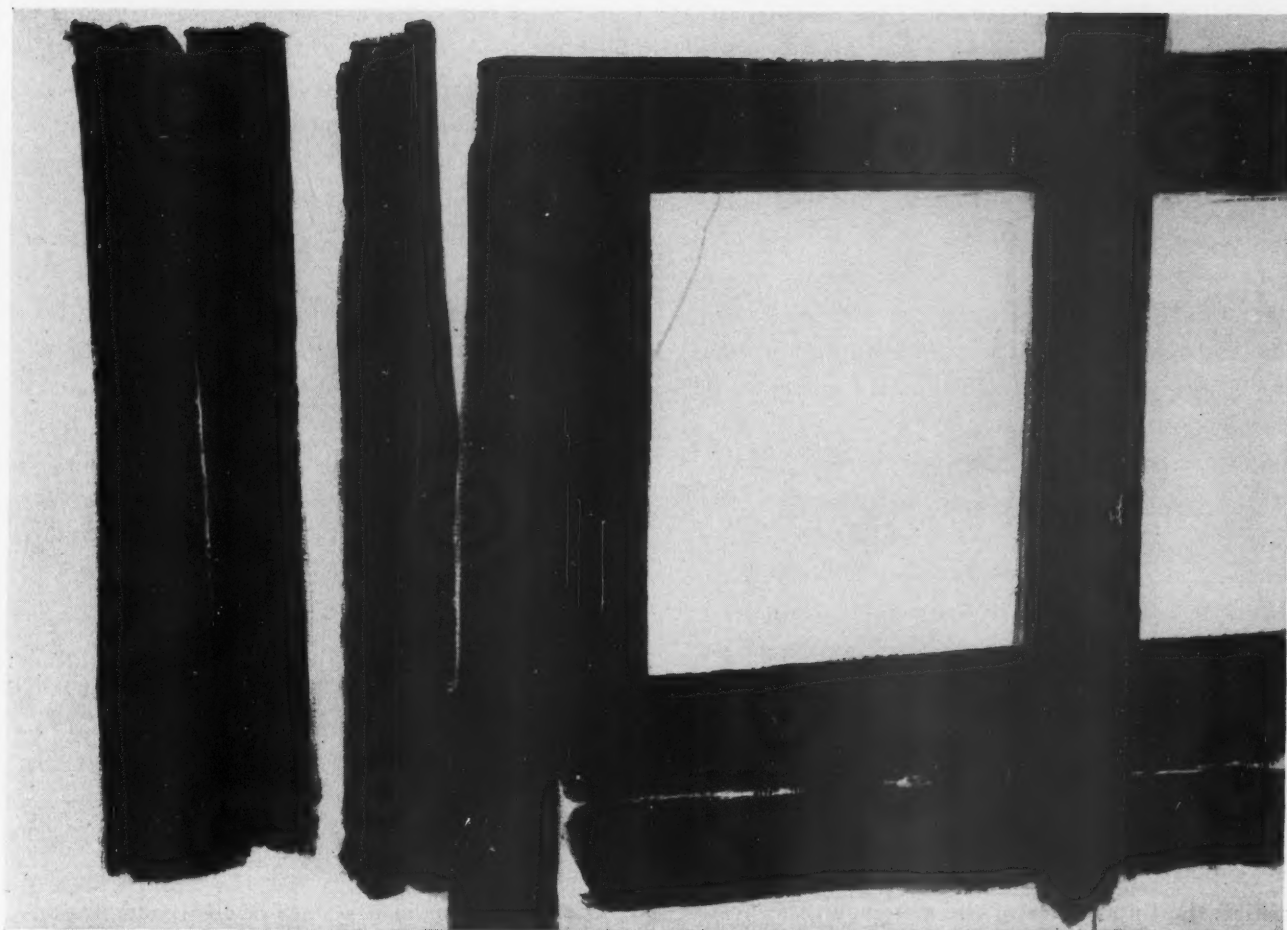
ists. He concluded that an American automobile was good enough for him but that painting a picture or making a sculpture was not within our province. We feel that this attitude is changing daily. The fact that there are probably several million amateur painters in our country today indicates the force of the urge to paint. It is a symptom of the degree to which painting as a creative medium has made an impact on the American consciousness.

The rest of the world knows about our movies, but it has been a slow process for us to win respect on the score of other art media. It will take time for us to have our prowess at painting receive the full respect of the rest of the world. One must remember that Americans are Europeans in culture and heredity. Nevertheless, at an international exhibit last year in India, where almost every country was represented, the conclusion of the Indian critics was that the twenty paintings representing the United States were by far the most interesting of any national group.

One of the by-products of our personal conviction has been to become acquainted with the majority of the artists mentioned here. Their personalities, intelligence and basic character lent strength to our feeling of confidence in their destiny. They will continue to challenge as well as reflect the fantastic colossus of our industrial output. They know that a country cannot live by material strength alone but that a truly great society must have as one of its elements works of art which inspire and are inspired by a creative life.

Just as our forefathers, in writing the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, gave expression to a social philosophy in a literary masterpiece, so the contemporary artist is expressing in his medium the spirit and emotions of twentieth century America with a courage, vigor and freshness comparable to that of the great men of 1776.

ED. NOTE: *After reading Mr. Neuberger's enthusiastic report on the American scene, we asked him whether, in retrospect, he found any marked trend or trends in his more recent collecting. He told us that he thought not. The chronological sequence of the illustrations herewith should not be considered significant, especially since the Hopper, of 1931, is a very recent purchase.*



FRANZ KLINE: *Painting #7*, oil, 1952. *Egan Gallery, New York*

## Painting By Another Name

BY SAM HUNTER

In an unpublished essay on van Gogh, Michel Seuphor, the French critic, writes: "After van Gogh comes something other than painting, resembling painting, but seeking rhythms within itself, disengaging itself from the object, a painting that approaches music, or visual abstraction." Seuphor is not the first to have related abstract art to music, but he may very well be the first to describe it as "something other than painting." Although he is referring to the whole subsequent development of twentieth century art, his words are particularly appropriate to contemporary abstract painting in America, and most particularly that painting known as abstract expressionism. For advanced American painting today will no longer submit very gracefully to old aesthetic

criteria, even to those which have been used to rationalize the work of cubism, or of the non-objective paintings of the Bauhaus, of Kandinsky or de Stijl. To be in communion with this "new" painting requires a fundamental readjustment of vision, a susceptibility to not only a whole new artistic decor and presentation — or perhaps the absence of it — but a radically revised notion of the artistic process. It seems less and less possible to accommodate the vision of the abstract expressionists on the old basis; once one meets them on their own ground, however, heady new possibilities for contemporary American art and a new range of modern beauty unfold.

The difficulty with the work of the abstract expressionists is that it ignores the traditional



scaffolding of even abstract art of the recent past, the framework of "illusion" and artifice with which the past giants of non-objective tradition, such as Klee and Kandinsky, found it necessary to clothe and project their vision. A whole secondary process of elucidation, of aesthetic schematization, has been omitted by these new and not-so-new Americans, in favor of primary sensation. The particular character of this American fundamentalism, if we may call it that, is best clarified by comparison with typical contemporary European abstract painting.

In the recent show of "Younger European Painters" at the Guggenheim Museum from which the examples cited below have been selected (and ignoring any invidious comparison of the relative excellence of American and European examples) it was clear how radically American abstract art had departed from European tradition. We may best suggest the differences by noting the main features of the Europeans. In the end, of course, both groups of paintings must be measured by the same absolute aesthetic standards — the strength and temperament of the artistic personalities, the importance of the statement, the beauties of the language of paint. In the case of the Europeans, even taking the varied styles of, for example, Ubac, Manessier, Singier and Lansky, we find at least this aim in common: to create on canvas a world of "pictorial" effects and incident. The language of shape and texture may vary, the pictorial universe may be totally independent of external visual reality or, in some cases (Manessier, for example) may have extra-pictorial associations or atmosphere. The space in which all these paintings live is a dimensional space, a "stage-setting" — no matter that the paintings may seem strictly bound to the flat surface — a space that exercises a sovereign prerogative in locating pictorial incident.

Three painters in this show, Riopelle, Soulages and Mathieu, all of whom subsequently have held one-man shows in New York, seemed at first sight to transgress on tradition, to substitute a more direct and immediate sensation without any mediating pictorial effects. Yet on closer examination, it appeared they were none of them radically different from their colleagues. Their "Americanisms" — a matter of speed, of big design, and

pictorial acrobatics — seemed somewhat artificially super-imposed. I had the impression, for example, that Soulages (whom I hasten to add struck me as a painter of individuality and force) had merely blown up the formal structure and calligraphy of Hartung; his art had changed quantitatively but not qualitatively and required the same type of aesthetic contemplation as that of Hartung, or for that matter, Klee and Kandinsky. Even Mathieu, who often seems so close to our own deadly serious avant-garde, is not content simply with a great show of strength and invention, all in a single burst, but must somehow also create illusion; he is "action" painter *plus* magician. Both irony and wit characterize his effect, and some sort of detachment, an aesthetic removal; it has been a consistent difference between American and French art, and literature, too. The contemporary Europeans still belong to that congenial family of art whose premises were established early in this century; no matter how expressive, violent or circumspect their statements these artists are unable or unwilling to surrender a traditional habit of aesthetic *arrière pensée*, of ordering their sensation in a system of logic and rule.

When we come to recent American abstract paintings we find these procedures are either not operative, or, where they are operative to some degree (as in the art of Baziotes and Gottlieb), of minor importance. To approach this painting with old standards of abstract painting puts us on shifting sands. In American abstract expressionism, facture and forms, the painting field and what takes place within it, primary sensation and secondary pictorial effects by which it may be elaborated — all merge. This painting is non-dimensional in the sense that it describes nothing but itself. The idea has been advanced that such painting is a new form of "action"; while this interpretation too easily lends itself to a kind of anarchist mystique, it is true that the "freedom" of the new expression has disqualified it from familiar aesthetic rules. The old landmarks are not useful in dealing with the speed with which the abstract painters register their sensation and with their neglect of old painting decor and decorum. The new beauty abstract expressionists have uncovered, so often bluntly stated in the rudest configurations, many times mixed with



KYLE MORRIS: *Blue and Black*, oil, 1953. *Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York*

ugliness, with heady power impulses, is a difficult experience, hard-won for artist and spectator alike; in any case it prevents us from going through our usual routine of art appreciation. For we quite literally are dealing with "something other than painting," but "resembling painting."

Part of the reason for the remarkable originality of this painting style must be sought in its origins. Abstract expressionism was a hybrid phenomenon in its beginnings, a step-child of a number of influences, of non-objective painting, of surrealism and of expressionism. It is significant that none of its first practitioners, like Gorky or de Kooning, or of its central figures, such as Pollock, were ever abstract purists or non-objective artists of the antiseptic variety. They were always as much concerned with content as with form. From Miro's "free form," Masson's rhythms, Picasso's color and intensity, they derived, in their various styles, a totally new effect, a synthesis where form and content are indivisible. With Gorky's "Garden of Sochi" of 1941 and Pollock's

"She Wolf" of 1943 and paintings of the same and immediately following period by Baziotes, Gottlieb, Tomlin, Motherwell, and Rothko, abstract painting in America received a totally new impulse in a major expressive form.

Most characteristic of these artists was the ability to work within a limited vocabulary of abstract devices and yet achieve the immanence and expressive effects of art that had heretofore been associated with imagery. Accident, chance and automatism have all played their role in this painting, in the way of keeping creative impulse free and active. Yet with all the liberties this art has taken, there are certain conventions which it observes. Most important have been, as noted, the immediacy and *speed* with which sensation is registered; and with that the insistence on creating an indeterminate and rudimentary expressive vocabulary of brush stroke and texture, of pure paint matter, almost aesthetically unprocessed. In this connection, the difference between the art of the late Bradley Walker Tomlin and of

Mark Toby (aside from the difference in strength of personality) is illuminating. Tomlin's art steadfastly rejected any particular form of writing or calligraphy; for Tomlin it was not only a matter of avoiding formula, but of keeping alive an art of breadth and gravity, an art of necessity, of refined lyrical strain. Only spirits of the sternest stuff would thus dispense with the more obvious pictorial capers, and descriptive attractions, and would risk the charge of ineptitude and oafish painting manners.

Behind the apparent clumsiness that even so elegant an artistic personality as Tomlin gambled with is an effort to give powers of speech to the absolutely rudimentary elements of the painting process. The abstract expressionists have renewed and refreshed the language of painting, from the ground up. Their re-examination of the basic assumptions of paintings have begun with the simplest artistic quantities — the rhythm of the hand, the sensation of paint paste, the aesthetic of the accidental effect. These painters have made it possible for a photographer like Aaron Siskind to understand the expressive possibilities and beauty of a paint stain found on a shingle of weathered tar paper. Just as Gertrude Stein gave a certain ring and rhythm to the most banal words, to the articles "a," "an," and "the," the lowliest drudges of language, by placing them in new aesthetic combinations, so these abstract painters are rehabilitating the humblest painting metaphors and making them stand for something both aesthetically valuable and viable. Every generation must learn to spell, to use words and paint, sometimes painfully, all over again.

Abstract expressionism has strengths and weaknesses which are inherent in its method. The strengths are the greater expressiveness of the immediate effect, the seductions of pure textural excitement, the unity that speed imposes in registering sensation; the weaknesses are that the subtler uses of the language of painting may degenerate as artists exercise a painting vernacular of expletives alone, and that the absence of personal style may become something of a fetish. But so long as abstract expressionist painting shows signs of exuberant vigor, growth and flexibility, as it does today, so long as it is an art of imagination and discovery, and not merely of license, its pos-

sible perils need no further elaboration.

The impressive vitality of this new painting, and some signs of changing directions, were presented over this past year in such exhibitions as those of Franz Kline, Jackson Pollock, Adolph Gottlieb and James Brooks. Influenced perhaps by Tomlin, Gottlieb's art has shown a sudden expansion and decisiveness — a new capacity to think in large painterly terms. His exhibition gave me the sense that he had cast off some of his past artistic props — those sometimes distracting hieroglyphs — and achieved a new flow of energy.

The dismantling of the conventional scaffolding of abstract painting and its replacement by new pictorial substance was repeated in an even more significant show, that of Franz Kline (see illustration). It is Kline now, even more than Jackson Pollock, who is pushing forward the frontiers of abstract art. Kline's art is narrower and yet more cogent than Pollock's, his forms more bludgeoning, his application of pigment more aggressive. Yet like Pollock's his is a pure, lyrical, painterly sensibility. I cannot guess why he is such a tremendous presence; his palette is restricted to black and white, within which he manages a range of inflection that makes many artists who work in color seem dull and plodding. Kline has apparently been influenced by oriental calligraphy; his great, grave black ciphers enter and leave the canvas at oblique angles; his art is as eloquent for its elisions and omissions, for what it leaves unsaid, as it is for its explicit content.

Another significant statement — characterized, like Kline's, by completeness of utterance and legibility in some radically new fashion — is being made by Philip Guston. If Kline is expressionist in tenor, Guston is an impressionist — depending for effect almost exclusively on subtle tonalities (usually coral pink) and on soft, suggestive irradiations of pigment, which strangely fuse the hot-house poetry of late Monet with that utter materiality of pigment typical of the abstract expressionists — or as they must now also be described, abstract impressionists.

Guston, in fact, seems typical of the newest developments in abstract painting. Some of its rigors have been softened in the direction of poetic finesse, mood, suggestions of the atmospheric subtleties of Chinese landscape painting.

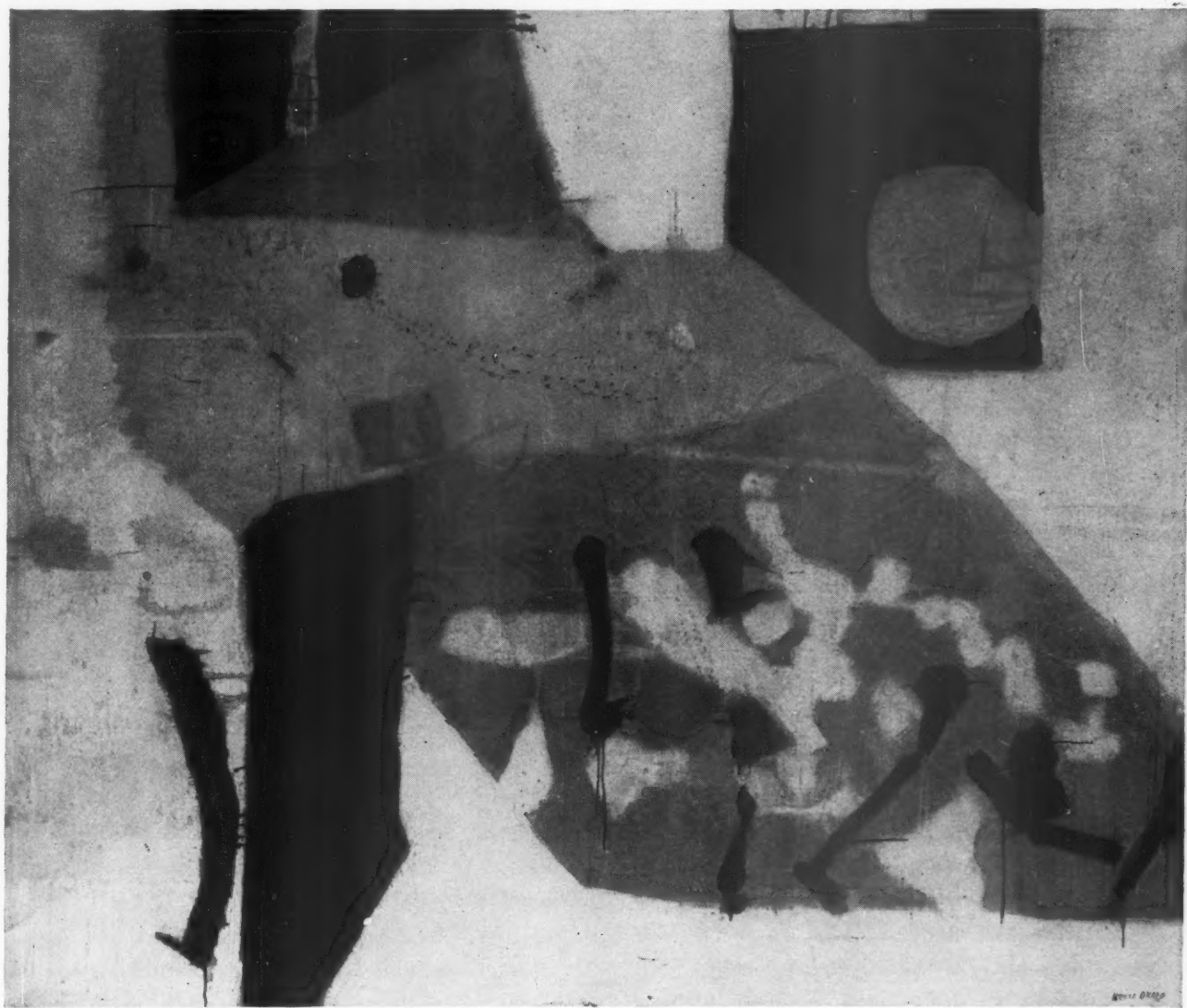


In the recent Guggenheim Museum show, "Younger American Painters," there was a whole batch of west coast paintings of remarkable fluency and persuasiveness which added a new poetic depth to abstract expressionism — work by Kyle Morris (see illustration), Paul Wonner, Carl Morris, Kenneth Nack and, with a more barbaric and splendid note, Ward Morehouse and Ralph Ducasse. One of the most successful and original in this new poeticizing mood has been Kenzo Okada, a Japanese artist living in America these last four years (see illustration).

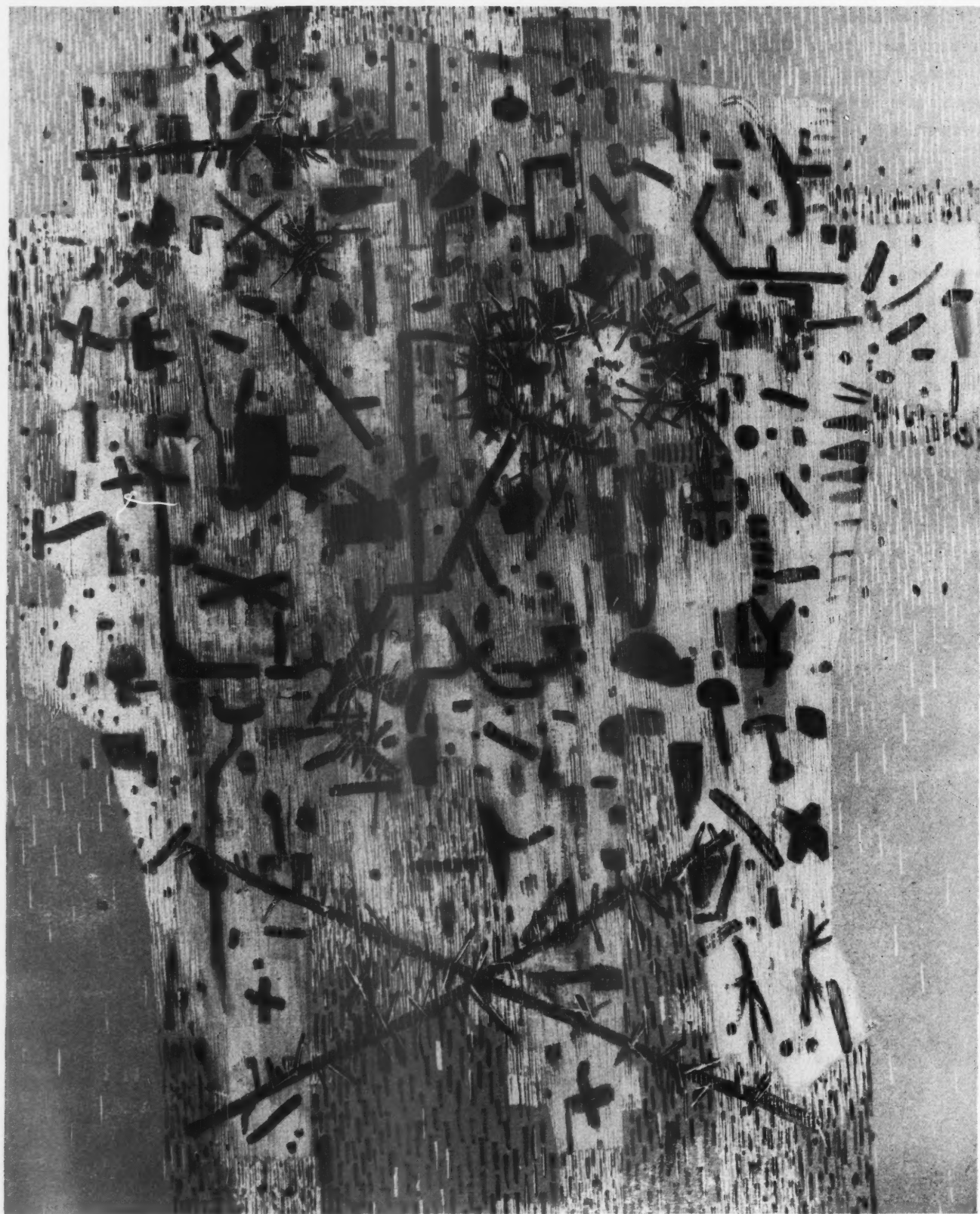
Okada's mature abstract style was formed in contact with American painting, after an earlier, semi-representational linear manner. Now he builds up his paintings out of a succession of turpentine washes, giving his flat surfaces an effect

of vague, watery depths and veiled distances. He alternately uses a loaded, dripping brush, rubs and stains his canvas, or pulls paint away from it with paper, all to the end of creating a harmonious and varied play of felicitous accident.

With the impressive spate of activity among younger abstract artists of talent, with the artists of established reputation showing capacity for change and growth, abstract expressionism has colored the American painting scene with an excitement that possibly has not been experienced since the years following the Armory Show. Then the Parisian derivation of advanced American art was unmistakable; now the general idiom is unregeneratively native in character. Our abstract art has found an atmosphere and a tongue all its own, and it is making significant painting history.



KENZO OKADA: *Solstice*, oil, 1954. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York



LEE MULLICAN: *Passage Factor*, oil, 1953. *Willard Gallery, New York*

A strong calligraphic element is found in the large non-objective canvases by Lee Mullican executed with a palette knife.

# Art Trends of the West Coast

BY HENRY J. SELDIS

Recent works by West Coast imagists and non-objective artists alike evoke a sense of contemplation, peacefulness and freedom which may be attributed to local geographic or climatic conditions and to a conscious or unconscious absorption of Oriental philosophies — though not necessarily of Oriental styles. This interesting trend can be found especially in prominent painters of Southern California and the Northwest who display the same sort of spiritual kinship to the Orient as San Francisco artists generally retain for New York.

If there is any trend which can be pointed to with certainty as far as artists of the West Coast are concerned, it is the intensity of their inner search. Their eager experimentation and their thoughtful individuality have prevented — with a few minor and diminishing exceptions — the creation of any distinctive schools of West Coast painting. While various individual artists at times arrive at similar personal aesthetics, there has been no conscious artistic or intellectual attempt to form well-defined groups.

The intensity of each artist's search not only for his most effective technique of expression but for the profound meaning of life he attempts to express in his art has led to the growing stature of an increasing number of outstanding West Coast painters. This development is being recognized more and more in New York, the central market place from which West Coast artists are, for the most part voluntarily, so far removed.

It may be significant that some of our best painters and sculptors migrated to the Far West from other parts of the country because they found an ideal situation either in the balmy Mediterranean climate of Southern California or the misty clouds of Puget Sound.

In some areas, such as the Northwest, the deep interest taken in Oriental art and thought by men like Mark Tobey, Morris Graves, and Kenneth Callahan accounts for a regional emphasis closely related to some Far Eastern aesthetics; in other West Coast areas, such as Southern California,

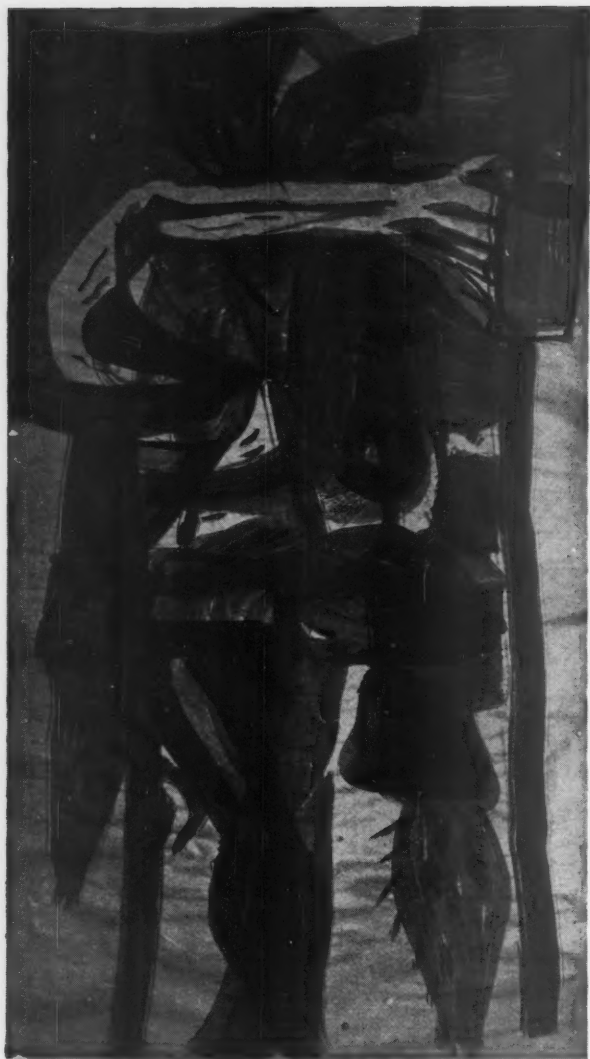
the influence of highly skilled and European-oriented painters who came here some years ago — Eugene Berman and Rico Lebrun, for example — helped to supersede both the absolutely insulated manner of painting exemplified by the California landscape painters of fifty years ago and, more recently, the dominance of the California water color school.

Only in San Francisco the dominating influence of New York trends can be detected although once more mitigated by the local land-and-city scape. Here as in other West Coast areas most promising young painters continue to explore the non-objective approaches, but some of the more prominent have once more turned to nature for their point of departure if not for their subject matter. Only in a few avant-garde art schools are imagists still regarded as heretics.

Paintings by leading young painters as diverse as Lee Mullican and Howard Warshaw, both of Los Angeles, invite contemplation and avoid any shock element. Painted in very different ways, their work lacks the nervous tension reflected in the work of many of their contemporaries elsewhere in America. Mullican, whose work is much influenced by American Indian and South Pacific art forms, attempts to capture on his canvas the essence rather than the objective image of the vast expanses of sea and land which surround him. Warshaw finds that the more relaxed way of life in California strengthens the intuitive basis of his paintings. Mullican's large paintings with their sense of freedom and inner light have, of course, an altogether different impact from Warshaw's disciplined and theatrical paintings which give evidence of the rigorous apprenticeship and versatile craftsmanship which have given him a freedom of choice, which he says: "you cannot attain if you have nothing from which to choose."

Among the gifted abstract-expressionists who dominate the scene in San Francisco, Richard Diebenkorn's strong sense of color and tonality and the veteran Erle Loran's vigorous exploration of abstract approaches have recently created



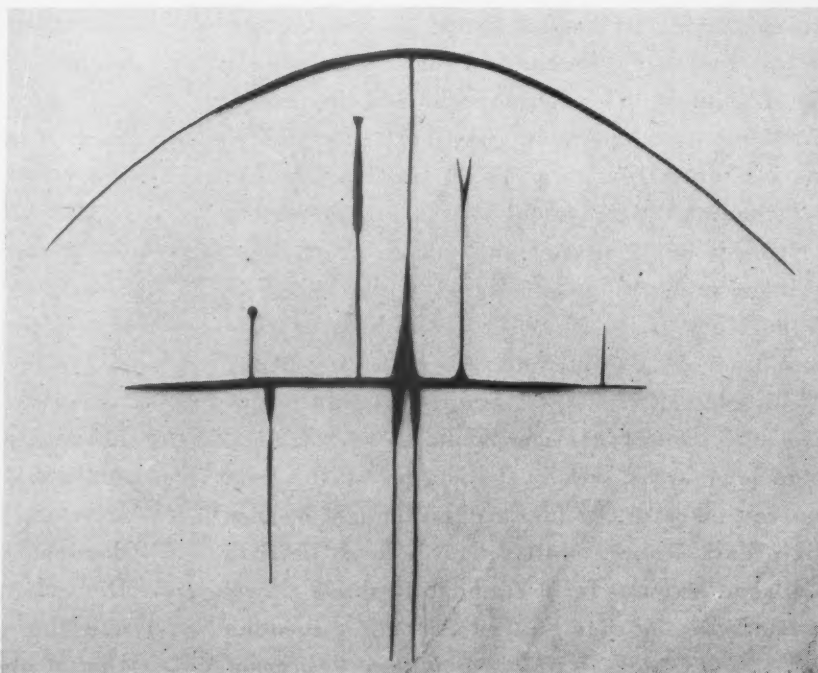


RICO LEBRUN: *A Beggar*, oil, 1954  
*Jacques Seligmann Galleries, New York*

This recent conception of "A Beggar" reveals more flowing lines without abandonment of Lebrun's superb draftsmanship.

OLIVER ANDREWS  
*Hanging Sculpture*, steel, 1954  
*Alan Gallery, New York*

"Hanging Sculpture" typifies the simple design preferred by this young sculptor.



the greatest stir.

In Southern California, Rico Lebrun remains one of the most influential painters, both through the work of his most talented students (whose imaginative skill, eventually liberated them from their early imitation of Lebrun himself) and through the impact of his own recent work. A year's stay in Mexico has softened Lebrun's line, liberated his often constricted figures and heightened his color sense. To judge from preliminary sketches and collages, future Lebrun canvases will lose none of the drama of his earlier work but will give a more relaxed and a freer impression.

While the influence of the West's wide open spaces and man's inescapable intimacy with nature is reflected only indirectly in much of West Coast art, rancher-painter Channing Peake shows a notable affinity for his surroundings. This is expressed in his subject matter of abstracted farm implements, in his vivid colors and in his creation of large canvases suitable in style and material for display in outdoor patio areas.

The existence of such patios or "outdoor rooms" is, of course, a distinct characteristic of contemporary California architecture. Its best practitioners attempt to combine Neutra's theory of bringing the outdoors inside with Wright's insistence







that a building must first of all have an organic relationship with its surroundings. An excellent example of West Coast architecture is the Montecito residence of Miss Alice Erving, designed by Arvin Shaw and Lulah Maria Riggs to afford the best view of foothills, orchards and oakgroves which surround the tent-like, mostly glass-enclosed structure.

A number of West Coast sculptors turn to sea forms for their compositional inspiration and to native woods and stones for a large variety of materials. But it is the welded and wire metal sculpture which seems most vigorous among the work produced by younger artists. Among these, the reputation of Oliver Andrews of Santa Barbara is growing. His forms reflect the West's greater simplicity of life and intense spiritual aspirations. Much influenced in approach by Giacometti, Andrews creates non-objective structures at times reminiscent of primitive ritual sculptures. His work will be shown for the first time in New York by the Alan Gallery this year.

While many trends in West Coast art are indigenous, artists here are by no means isolated from the latest New York or European developments. Several nationally prominent museums and a number of spirited small galleries afford frequent exhibitions, enabling artists and laymen alike to keep up to date with trends elsewhere.

It is only the continued importance of New York as the major marketplace of art that brings most West Coast artists to the East Coast at regular intervals. Most of them, even some of those who are well represented by New York galleries, express the desire "to duck out of the bitter and often destructive fight for attention."

The Seattle and Portland museums have done much to introduce Oriental art here and to relate it to our time and place, simultaneously offering their visitors large and selective samples of the best in European and American works of many ages. San Francisco boasts three major art museums — the Palace of the Legion of Honor, the De Young and the San Francisco Museum of Art. Each has found its special area of effectiveness. Together with the art schools, these museums in the Bay area provide cultural leadership and stimulus far beyond their immediate vicinity. Yet this metropolis has only a few commercial



HOWARD WARSHAW: *Turning Figure*, oil, 1954  
Frank Perls Gallery, Beverly Hills

Dramatically conceived and executed, this painting reveals a contemplative peacefulness found in many West Coast works.

galleries, and none of them seems to provide its artists with even nearly adequate exhibition and sales outlets.

In Los Angeles the situation is completely reversed. As far as experimental artists are concerned their encouragement comes mainly from a half dozen well-managed private galleries, some discriminating local collectors and from each other. At this point, it appears that the Los Angeles County Museum has been somewhat influenced by the incessant attack on "modern art"



Dining room and walled terrace of the Alice Erving house in Montecito, California  
Designed by Arvin Shaw and Lulah Maria Riggs in 1952

carried on by the city council and the Hearst press in a farcical attempt to link avant-garde painters with left-wing political movements.

The climate of opinion regarding contemporary art is at such low ebb in Los Angeles that even critics of the Los Angeles County Museum, where art unevenly shares the attention of the public with natural history exhibits and historic displays, must explain some of its puzzling attitude in terms of pressure from county politicians.

The city's most recent *cause célèbre* was an abstracted, rather routine piece of decorative sculpture by the Malibu artist Bernard Rosenthal, commissioned for the new Los Angeles police department building. The attack actually seems to be aimed at the Municipal Art Commission. Under Kenneth Ross' direction this Commission has valiantly tried to fill the void by bringing exhibitions

of Matisse, Frank Lloyd Wright and other distinguished shows to the city. Since these exhibits drew record attendances even by cosmopolitan standards, it would appear that Ross was on the right track, but his employers found "modern art" a convenient political football. The decision of the Municipal Art Commission to approve the contested statue may well prove to be its last.

The current situation at the County Museum is rather murky. By August, James Byrnes, formerly curator at the museum and now director of the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center, had not been replaced. Meanwhile, excellent paintings which won purchase awards during recent annual shows (to which Byrnes invited nationally prominent art experts as jurors) have been relocated in a rather inaccessible gallery. No program of exhibiting contemporary work by local

CARLA TOMASO: #12, plastic paint, 1954  
*Collection of the Artist*

Many young painters like Carla Tomaso have found a free and dynamic way of painting with a non-objective approach. This large canvas with its sculptural quality is typical of her work, soon to be introduced in New York.



artists, outside of the annual, is in effect.

The 1953 annual exhibition aroused the ire of many Los Angeles artists by demanding that they submit their works by two categories: "objective, including portraits, landscapes, still lifes, etc." and "non-objective, including semi-abstract and abstract." Not only did they protest this semantic absurdity and its underlying implications, but they saw in the selection of the jury a reversal of the trend which had, during the more recent exhibits, replaced limited local criteria with widely recognized national criteria through the invitation of prominent outside jurors.

In Southern California, therefore, it is the smaller museums which offer much-needed opportunities for one-man shows and group exhibits to progressive and sometimes controversial painters. Under the direction of the late Donald Bear, the Santa Barbara Museum of Art was for eleven years in the forefront of contemporary art in America. While the museum attempts to create a balance between the art of today and of previous periods on its calendar, the new director, Ala Story, plans to follow the museum's own tradition of encouraging young painters by initiating an

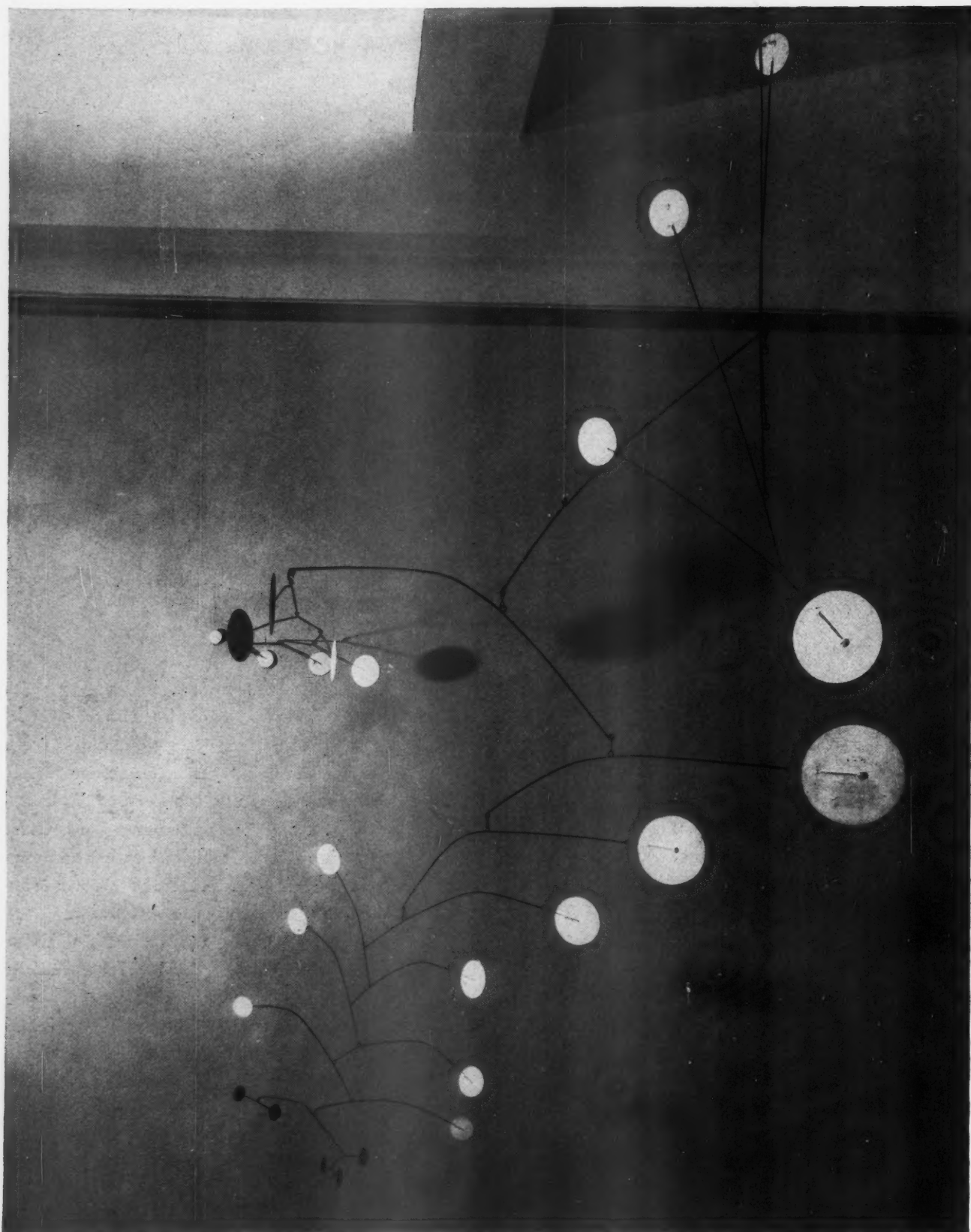
annual next year which will not be limited by restrictions similar to those of the last Los Angeles County Museum annual. Also active in exhibiting representative young painters from many parts of the country are the Pasadena Art Institute and the La Jolla Art Center.

There is a strong feeling among West Coast artists that the area in which they have chosen to live remains an intellectual and artistic frontier — open to all creative speculations.

An increasing number of West Coast artists would agree with Herbert Read when he asserts that "art is in the pattern, which is a personal intuition of the artist, and not in the imagery." Others prominent on the West Coast scene would argue with Read that art is in the imagery as well as in the pattern. At present the non-objective painters seem to be gaining influence here while many vigorous abstractionists also continue to receive attention.

The only predictions one can make with any certainty are that no one school will dominate West Coast art in the foreseeable future and that the element of introspection and contemplation will be found more and more in the contemporary works of this area.





ALEXANDER CALDER: *Driving Snow Flurries*, wire and sheet iron painted black and white. *Curt Valentin Gallery, New York*

# An Exhibition of Contemporary American Art

BY NORBERT KRICKE

*Translated by Stowell Rounds*

ED. NOTE: In planning the present issue of ART IN AMERICA, we invited John Anthony Thwaites, an English critic living in Munich and deeply interested in the work of younger German artists, to comment on the reception of recent American art in Germany.

"I think I can help you," he replied, "not by writing anything myself, for there has been no exhibition of younger Americans here in Munich, so there are no reactions to record — but by sending you the enclosed extracts from letters. All of them come from Norbert Kricke, a young Düsseldorf sculptor who saw the American exhibition there. It came from Paris and was shown only in Düsseldorf. . . . Kricke himself works in color; that entirely changes the nature of so-called wire sculpture, of course. He understands more about color than most painters I know. Indeed, he is one of the most intelligent and gifted young artists of my acquaintance."

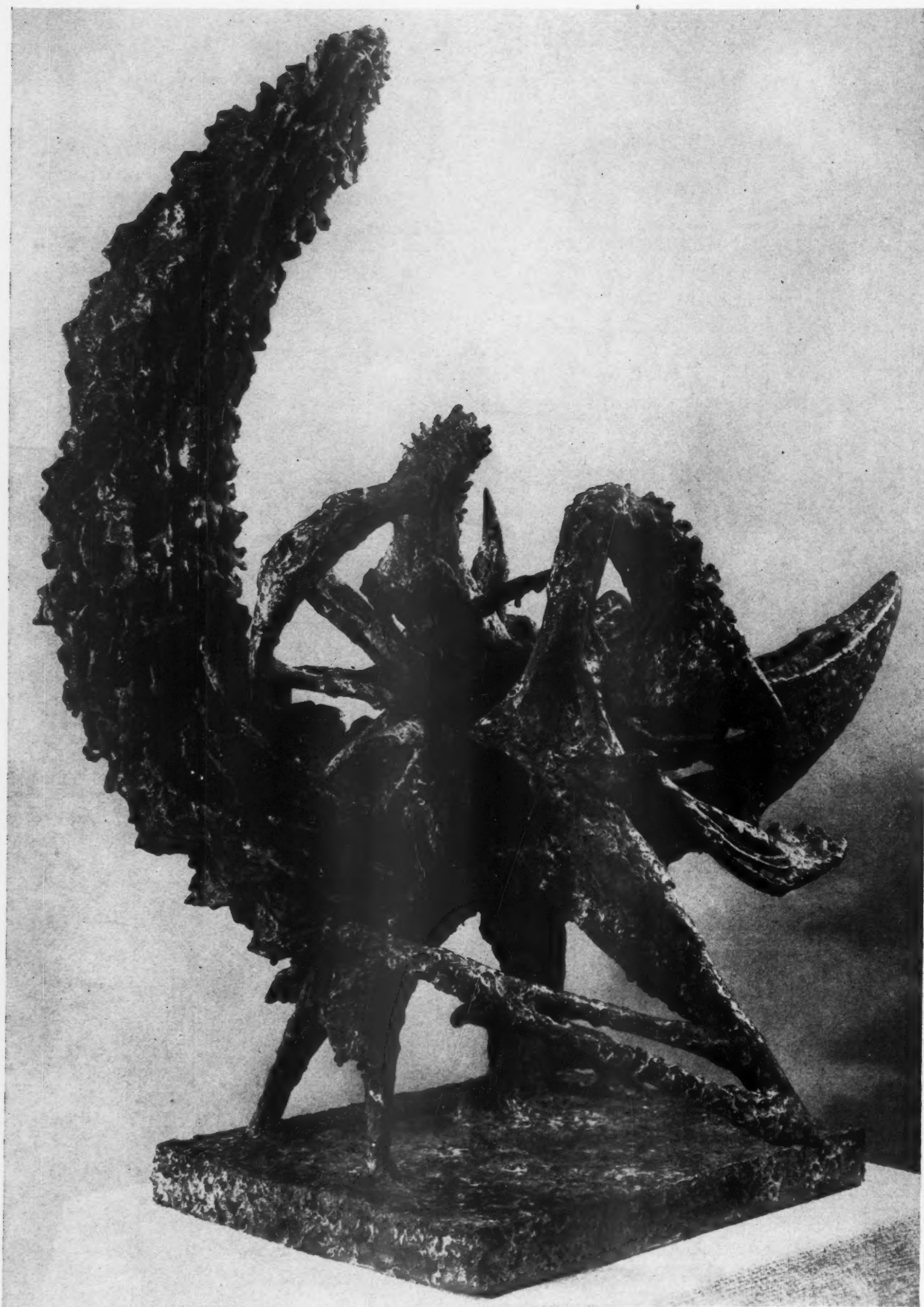
Norbert Kricke was born in Düsseldorf in 1922, and studied at the Berlin Academy after the war. He shows regularly at the Alex Vömel Gallery in Düsseldorf, one of the most discriminating in post-war Germany.

The exhibition of contemporary American art to which Kricke refers in his comments came to Düsseldorf from the Musée de l'art Moderne in Paris. It contained several works by each of the following sculptors and painters: Calder, Roszak, David Smith, Albright, Stuart Davis, Graves, Gorky, Hopper, Kane, Marin, Pollock, and Shahn. The items illustrated were among those included in the exhibition.

I have visited the exhibition five or six times and have been greatly and increasingly impressed. Among the sculptors Calder is the best, but David Smith and Roszak are vital and inventive, and I do not know of such sculptors here in Europe. Jackson Pollock seems better to me each time. He has qualities suggesting the old masters and he persuades one to share his ideas and feelings. The

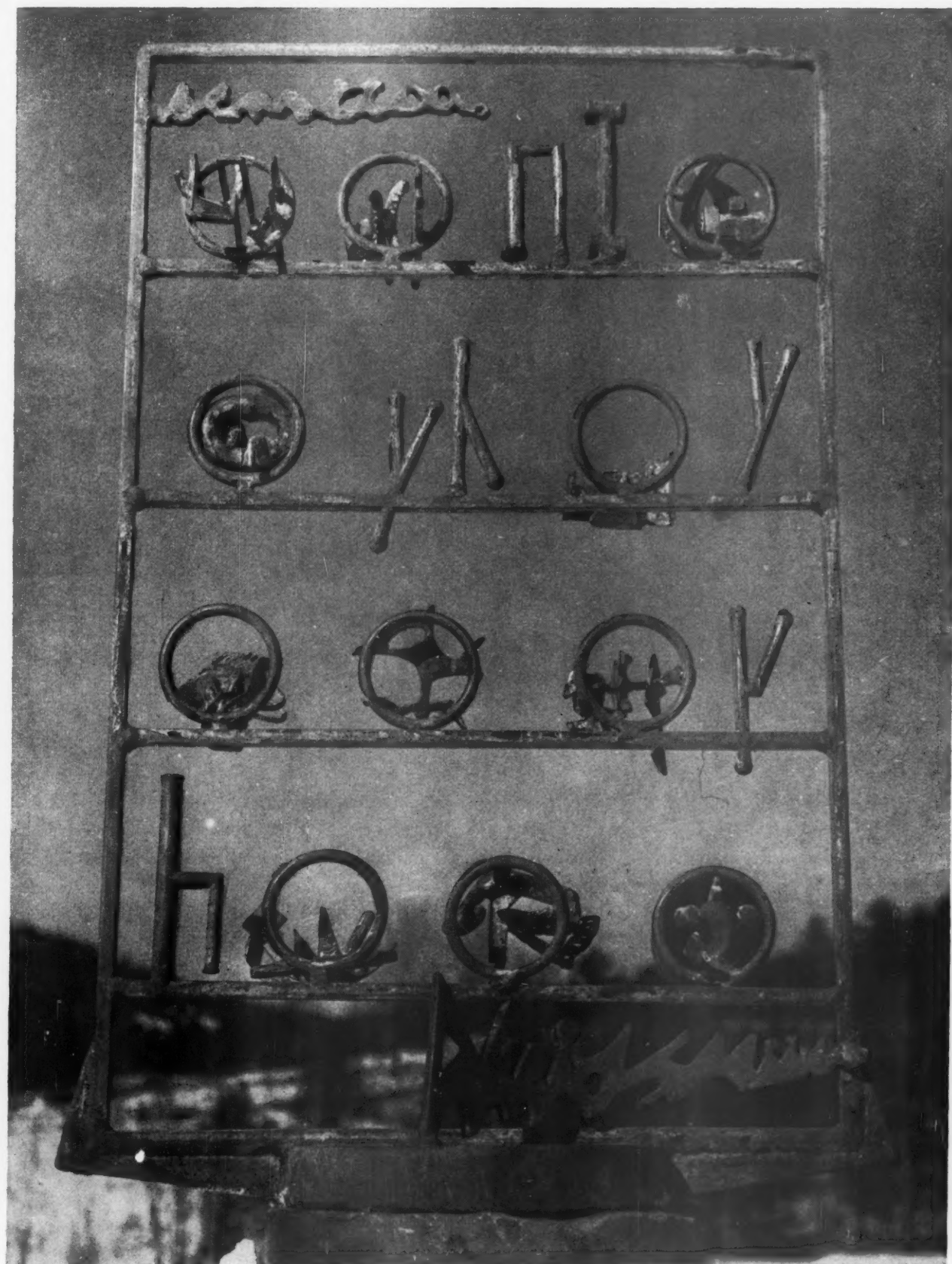


JACKSON POLLOCK: #12, oil, 1952  
Sidney Janis Gallery, New York



**THEODORE ROSZAK:** *Spectre of Kitty Hawk*, welded and hammered steel brazed with bronze and brass, 1946-47  
*Museum of Modern Art, New York*





DAVID SMITH: *The Letter*, welded steel, 1950. *Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute, Utica, New York*



STUART DAVIS: *Visa*, oil, 1951. *Museum of Modern Art, New York*

collection is similar to that illustrated in Ritchie's book, *Abstract Painting and Sculpture in America*. No other exhibition has gripped me so deeply, or so cheered me. One sees clearly what the state of affairs is here in Europe where long and gloomily we have been seeking lost values, but without looking around us where all is waiting to be modelled and described. . . . The Americans have a good foundation for their youthful vigor. . . . One thing is clear to me: Europe's aura of decay is not to be found in this exhibition. . . .

I have seen the American paintings again, and as with the sculpture there is much valuable artistic material. Stuart Davis uses color with extraordinary clarity, full of the possibility of future development. In European painting the use of color has not developed in pace with overall artistic purpose or design. Thus, many abstract

painters, including the best known, continue to use the colors of earlier epochs. . . . But one cannot make pictures out of graphic representations. . . . Two large groups of watercolors in the exhibition show clearly and logically the influence of Cezanne. . . .

When the European stops considering only Europe, and studies the whole present world, it will be apparent what an important place the Americans have taken in the field of art and how many of them are clearly in the lead. . . . The country, the land and the people of America belong more to the present than all of us in Europe put together. Just as France, or Paris, was the center for Impressionism, and to a greater or lesser degree the place where this school could develop, so I believe America will be the home of the art of our generation.

*Düsseldorf, Fall 1953*

## On Sculpture

continued from page 265

finding an exact equivalent of his experience, with making a new vision concrete because it has been conceived and felt in terms which are themselves new. These have always been the conditions for a genuine work of art.

What then are the terms of the new sculpture? What is it about? Can it be described, taught, explained? I do not know. This does not imply an anarchy or pure relativity of criteria. Certainly the distinction I have tried to draw between modern sculpture and older forms could become only a formal one — between cubic yards of open, spatial constructions and an equivalent number of monoliths; an Academy of one is as easy to organize as of the other. What kind of experience then, is expressed in this new art? A total one. No human situation or configuration of objects may be a warrant of its use as subject matter, but this does not mean that an artist is oblivious of the tensions of man, his ethical problems, or of natural phenomena; that he dreams his private way through the world about him. It is only that his moral and visual experiences, even though profoundly affecting, need not find their way directly and recognizably, or even identifiably transfigured, into his work. An artist's experience is always translated by his imagination into a new extension of reality and, in the medium of sculpture, into unique formulations of spaces and shapes. It is this imagined real world which is the *subject*. Hence its content draws on the subconscious, but, obviously, not in the way a doodle does. Its meaning results from that intense and personal choice by the artist, that manipulation of form and space, in a knowing but non-rational way, which has always been the hallmark of art. The esthetic image, the expression of his vision can be found only in his whole work. This is what constitutes his *style*. Since he creates the subject, he need not concern himself with objects.

The new sculptor must not concern himself with materials. The kind of sculpture I have described has been aided, without doubt, by the use of unorthodox materials and methods at the technical, but not necessarily at the creative, level. The facility with which these new ma-

terials can be used may reduce vision to *manner*. When new materials are mistaken for new plastic ideas, when technique is held in reverence, art is dissolved in craft. Picasso said: "I want to get to a point where nobody can tell how a picture of mine is done — simply because I want nothing but emotion to be given by it." A successful work gives the impression of having sprung completely formed from the artist's hand. I do not wish to suggest any magical or divine powers, but simply to say that the artist's mastery should be such that one is aware only of his vision and not of his sweat. The artist must be, therefore, at once a primitive in the grip of his vision and an eclectic of his own plastic ideas. He must work with ideas which are so untried that they are, until he formulates them, unknown, and he must use them with all the sophistication of his experience as an artist. He has cut loose from the paraphernalia of the old and is sensitive to the danger of easy accomplishment. He takes the risk that his work will be unpalatable to those who prefer the "old center of gravity."

For these reasons, some of which it shares with painting, the sculpture of today is still denied a discerning audience. It is true that there are historical conditions which have forced sculpture into a secondary role. But, also, practical ones such as bulk and weight are offered to explain this phenomenon. These are, however, rationalizations, substitutes for more basic esthetic reasons. Perhaps one such reason lies in the very character of the sculpture I have described: its extension in space. What might be called the mechanics of achieving this extension appears to be a contradiction of the demand that sculpture be experienced as a creative expression. Sculpture is often passed by in favor of painting because it possesses a "presence" which tends to give it existence in a prosaic sense, to put it in the category of objects in a room. This may confuse the audience. Painting escapes this problem because its medium is less tangible and its lack of bodily presence encourages the assumption that it is a work of the imagination. The new sculpture has to cope with imagery and materials which are not rooted in an accepted convention, and, in addition, its "presence" is a challenge to its intention. When the sculptor succumbs to the



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== New York 27 ==

seduction of materials and craft, he has failed to accept the challenge. When he transmutes the materials, as Picasso suggests, into a metaphor of his ideas and emotions, he has successfully met the challenge. He can reduce to a minimum the sensation of material to the advantage of his image. Great sculpture has been made of mud.

### *Government and the Arts*

*continued from page 273*

center in Washington, building the Smithsonian Gallery of Art, and awarding scholarships and fellowships to individuals. In June hearings were held which indicated wide support from many fields of the fine arts. Since then Mr. Howell has rewritten his proposals, which as of this writing are in the form of two bills, H.R. 10189 and 10223. The first proposes a program of grants to states, for assisting them to inventory their existing fine arts programs, to survey the need for additional programs, and to develop the latter so as to "furnish adequate programs, facilities and services in the fine arts to all their people." The Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare is authorized to make grants based on the cost of current state programs and of additional ones, with the federal contribution equalling but not exceeding that of the state, and with a top limit of \$100,000 a year per state. The total annual appropriation is specified as not to exceed \$5,500,000.

H.R. 10223 proposes to establish in the executive branch a national foundation for the development and encouragement of all the arts. It sets up a National Fine Arts Board of twenty-four members, representing eight major fields of the arts, appointed by the President, with nominations from professional bodies in the various fields. Each field is also covered by a divisional committee of nine members, appointed in the same manner. The foundation's duties and powers are very broad, embracing almost every form of assistance to all the arts. They also include the coordination of the fine arts programs of all other federal departments and agencies; and specific, well-thought-out plans for the decoration of public buildings and for international exchanges. The total annual appropriation is not to exceed \$1,000,000.

Compared to the two projects previously discussed, the Howell bills embody a fundamentally different approach, that of subsidies, mostly through the states, to assist in developing adequate fine arts facilities and programs for all our people. In view of current federal subsidies and other forms of assistance in the fields of science, agriculture, housing and shipping, among others, these proposed art subsidies are modest. The main purposes of the Howell bills, in my opinion, deserve support; the chief questions would be as to the specific organizations, policies and methods proposed. Among these questions are whether there is a clear enough definition of the respective art functions of the federal government on the one hand, and of state and local governments and nonprofit institutions on the other; whether the grants to states are to help the *development* of fine arts facilities, which seems a function belonging properly to the federal government, and a valuable function, or are for *continuing* federal support, which seems debatable; whether there should not be professional advisory bodies for the Department of Health, Education and Welfare; and in the case of H.R. 10223, whether an annual appropriation of \$1,000,000 would go far in carrying out its stated purposes. Mr. Howell has proved himself very open-minded to suggestions from the art world, and by the time this article is published, his bills may have been again rewritten. Regardless of their fate, he has made a positive contribution by putting forth definite proposals, having them discussed, listening to criticism, and acting on it. All of this is helping to shape future legislation which seems inevitable, sooner or later.

These various developments show a current trend toward more mature thinking on the whole problem. The extreme reactions common four or five years ago — unreasoning opposition to any government role in art, or naive belief in complete government support — are less common today. Let us hope that these discussions and actions will some day produce a long-range plan worthy of our role as a major nation and worthy of the creative vitality of our art.

*Please note:* ART IN AMERICA annual subscription \$4.00 instead of \$6.00 starting January 1, 1955.

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## Trends and the Museum

*continued from page 282*

developments but only as an observable tendency of recent times. It is, of course, based on a limited, highly selective sampling and does not take into account many complicating factors which may affect the future. For one thing, some of our best painters in the apparently neglected movements are still young (though not quite young enough to be included in this exhibition) and may still inspire a following even if they have not yet done so. For another, several of the abstract painters chosen are already showing signs of moving towards a figurative style. Again, the exhibition does not encompass a still younger generation of artists, who have not yet made their reputations, and among these there seems to be a growing tendency to combine figurative and abstract elements more freely and with less consciousness of a dividing line between them.

Since the Whitney Museum has never been interested in promoting any one kind of art, except in a qualitative sense, our only real concern in the matter is to try to understand new movements in time to do justice to their best artists while they are still working. It is always the individual painters and sculptors who, in their unpredictable response to their times, make the decisions.

---

*Subscribers please note:* Starting January 1, 1955 the annual subscription to ART IN AMERICA will be \$4.00 instead of \$6.00 a year. Single issues will be \$1.00 instead of \$1.50. See opposite page for announcement of the February and May issues.

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## Future Issues

*February Issue . . .*

### **NEW TALENT IN THE U. S. A.**

A sequel to last February's *Americans with a Future*, this issue will again present to the public samplings of new and unpublicized talent throughout the country.

About forty painters and sculptors will be selected and written up by key people in each of nine art centers in the United States. The editorial planning committee for the issue consists of James Thrall Soby, Chairman, Lloyd Goodrich, Dorothy C. Miller, John I. H. Baur, Bartlett H. Hayes, Jr., Katharine Kuh, and Gordon Washburn.

The American Federation of Arts has scheduled a traveling exhibition for 1955-56 based on the February *New Talent* issue. Each artist selected for publication will be invited to show one piece illustrated in the magazine, which will accompany the traveling exhibition as catalogue from March 1955 to March 1956.

*May Issue . . .*

### **AMERICAN RESTORATIONS**

Abbott Lowell Cummings of the Metropolitan Museum's American Wing will guest-edit this special issue. Restorations will be discussed as historical out-of-doors museums, with emphasis on regional variations, the problems of architectural restoration, and the art content indigenous to the restoration. Among the restorations to be considered will be Williamsburg, Cooperstown, Greenfield Village in Dearborn, Shelburne, Sturbridge, Deerfield, and Mystic.

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## Contributors

**John I. H. Baur**, Curator of the Whitney Museum of American Art, was formerly Curator of Painting and Sculpture at the Brooklyn Museum. He is author of *Revolution and Tradition in Modern American Art*, *American Painting in the Nineteenth Century*, and monographs on Eastman Johnson, John Quidor, Theodore Robinson, George Grosz, Loren MacIver, and I. Rice Pereira.

**S. Lane Faison, Jr.** is Chairman of the Department of Art and Director of the Lawrence Art Museum at Williams College. He was President of the College Art Association of America 1951-53. He taught at Yale 1932-1936, and has been art critic for *The Nation* since 1952. He is author of *Daumier's Third Class Railway Carriage*, *Manet*, and articles in the *Art Bulletin*, *Magazine of Art*, *Gazette des Beaux Arts*, *Journal of the Walters Art Gallery*, *Saturday Review of Literature*, and numerous reviews.

**Herbert Ferber**, internationally known sculptor, was born in New York in 1906. He has travelled in Italy and France and has exhibited here and abroad. His work can be seen in the collections of the Metropolitan Museum, the Whitney Museum and the Museum of Modern Art in New York, and the Grand Rapids Art Gallery and the Cranbrook Academy in Michigan. He has executed architectural sculpture for the B'nai Israel Synagogue in Millburn, New Jersey, and the Temple Beth-El, Providence, Rhode Island.

**Lloyd Goodrich** is Associate Director of the Whitney Museum of American Art, Director of the American Art Research Council and Chairman of the National Committee on Government and Art. He is author of biographies of Thomas Eakins, Winslow Homer, Yasuo Kuniyoshi, Max Weber, Edward Hopper, and John Sloan. He is now at work on a catalogue of the collection of the Whitney Museum which will form a survey of twentieth-century American art.

**Adolph Gottlieb**, progressive painter, was born in New York in 1903. He has won a number of awards, has had numerous one-man shows, and a retrospective exhibition at Bennington College and Williams College in 1954. He is best known for

his easel paintings but has also won awards for murals, and has recently designed a stained-glass façade for Park Avenue Synagogue in New York.

**Sam Hunter**, formerly Feature Editor of *Arts Digest*, is now an independent writer. He was Art Critic for the *New York Times*, on the editorial staff of Harry N. Abrams, Inc., is author of monographs on Toulouse-Lautrec and Raoul Dufy, and numerous articles on various aspects of modern art. He is now working on a book on modern French painting scheduled for fall publication.

**Norbert Kricke**, sculptor, was born in Düsseldorf in 1922, and studied at the Berlin Academy after the war. He shows at the Alex Vomel Gallery in Düsseldorf, is known for his interesting use of color in sculpture.

**Roy R. Neuberger** is the senior partner of Neuberger & Berman, and the president of Guardian Mutual Fund. He is Vice President and Treasurer of the American Federation of Arts. He shares with his wife, Marie Salant Neuberger, an extremely active interest in the art world generally, and in the collecting of twentieth-century American art. The Neuberger collection is currently on view at the Whitney Museum of American Art.

**Henry J. Seldis**, a recipient of the Mather Citation of the College Art Association of America for excellence in art criticism, has been art critic of the *Santa Barbara News-Press* for the past five years. He has contributed to *Fortnight Magazine* and the *Christian Science Monitor*. Recently he has been named Los Angeles columnist for *Arts Digest*.

**Vincent J. Scully, Jr.**, Assistant Professor, History of Art and Architecture, Yale University, is author, with A. Downing, of *The Architectural Heritage of Newport Rhode Island*, and of various articles on 19th and 20th century architecture published in the *Art Bulletin*, *Architectural Review*, *Art News*, etc. A new book, *The Shingle Style*, is scheduled for publication in the spring of 1955 by Yale University Press.

**Gordon Bailey Washburn**, Director of the Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh, was previously Director of the Albright Art Gallery in Buffalo and then of the Rhode Island School of Design in Providence.

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**Letter to the Editor**

Sir: I would like to second the plea of Helen M. Franc, in her review of my book *The Lost Art*, for 'more disciplined and sober writing' — and I promise to try very hard in the future to spell correctly the nickname of Tommaso di San Giovanni. May I hope for at least equal effort on your reviewer's part?

In seeking a statement of the author's intentions against which to measure his achievements she might wish to reconsider the relative merits of the preface as against the jacket blurb.

As for the statements quoted from the book, they were some thirty-odd months in the making and I stand behind them now. It is not a matter of "neo-Marxism" (I am not even sure what that is, and resent such trigger-happy labeling in an age when passports can be refused for no better reasons); nor is it insufficient history of art. Indigenous tradition is dead, as dead as it was once gloriously alive. I have put forward the Middle Ages as a period when more people, many more people proportionately, earned their living "by the exercise of their sensibilities": *precisely that*. I am not urging on those artisans and their patrons anything comparable to the blessings of a Stuyvesant Town — just a thriving, popular mythology and the capacity to shape the world so largely in its image. If this makes a "Golden Age," so be it. If you want Imperial Liberaces, Renaissance Liberaces, or post-Renaissance Liberaces the archeological woods are full of them; I have yet to see in medieval art anything worse than crudity.

ROBERT SOWERS, New York, N. Y.

*Paintings by Nineteenth and  
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WRITE

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